



More problems at woods force trust to take action

# BEAUTY SPOT CAR PARK OFF LIMITS

Report by Richard Guttridge

**A CAR park at a beauty spot near Halesowen has been closed amid claims of drug abuse and sexual activity.**

The area at Uffmoor Wood, near Halesowen, has been closed off by The Woodland Trust – just three months after the woodlands re-opened following the trust's first ever wood closure due to anti-social activities.

The decision has sparked anger among members of the woodland's friends group, who say they have not seen any inappropriate behaviour since the beauty spot was declared open again.

The group said on Facebook: "The members have been monitoring the woods on a daily basis at varying times of the day and have seen nothing untoward except for the odd dog off a lead."



Uffmoor Wood

Toby Bancroft, regional manager for the Woodland Trust, said he was disappointed the charity had had to take such action.

## Unsafe

"The fact of the matter is that the continued anti-social behaviour makes this wood unsafe, which is a shame because it is a great place to visit," he said.

Strides have been made to make the wood safer, he said, including recruiting a team of wardens to monitor incidents and trying to encourage better behaviour.

Uffmoor Wood has previously been closed for nearly six months by the Woodland Trust, which looks after the 85-acre site. It was the first time they had closed one of its woodlands to the public. The action was then described as a 'last resort' after a spate of problems that included dog attacks on other pets and sheep being killed on neighbouring land, off-road bikers and groups of people meeting for sex.

## TOWN NAMED AS FIRST-TIME NATIONAL FINALIST



Hilary Bills, Eve O'Connor and Elaine Cammies launch the Halesowen in Bloom donation box in the Cornbow shopping centre

COLOURFUL Halesowen has made the prestigious finals of national gardening competition Britain in Bloom – for the first time ever.

Volunteers for Halesowen in Bloom said they were overjoyed to hear they had been picked for the final of not one, but two accolades, which judges the town as having the finest quality flowers, most hard-working volunteers, and a diverse range of greenery.

The Royal Horticultural Society revealed the finalists for its 54th year with Halesowen

In Bloom reaching the national final for the first time. It is one of five groups making up the Urban Community category.

The group has also been announced as a finalist for the Heart of England – Midlands award in which they won gold for the third year running.

Dudley councillor Hilary Bills, a member of the group, praised the tireless efforts of the town's organisations, businesses and volunteers.

She said: "We have the Women's Institute, Friends of Gardens, we have volunteers who water flower beds. We have one big donor, Sandvik Holdings Ltd who always give us money for plants. And people can buy troughs in the centre too for £40, with their name on it."

People are invited to donate what they can to collection boxes in the Cornbow shopping centre. Visit [facebook.com/people/Halesowen-Bloom](https://facebook.com/people/Halesowen-Bloom) for more information.

## APPEAL

### Footballers help boost fund for Isla

FORMER Wolves, Albion and Walsall players rallied around for a charity match that raised £6,000 towards a two-year-old girl's cancer treatment in America.

Ex-Wolves 'keeper Matt Murray brought the West Midlands All Stars to play Dormston School Old Boys at Lye Town on Sunday.

Isla Austin is being flown to New York for treatment aimed at preventing her cancer coming back.

Isla was diagnosed with cancer on her first birthday and has since had chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery.

● Pictures and report – page 4

## ADDICTION

### Radical new way to tackle drug crime

SUPPORT workers in the Black Country have welcomed radical plans to curb drug-fuelled crime, insisting: "We must support addicts and not punish them."

Sunny Dhadley, who works with drug addicts in the Black Country, said it was time for a 'fresh approach' to 'transform society' by assisting those suffering from substance dependence.

● Free heroin scheme – page 11

## CAMPAIGN

### Petition launched over knife crime

A CAMPAIGN to change the law on knife crime has been launched by The Express & Star, The Chronicle's sister newspaper, following a surge of violence in the region. Since January there has been 21 stabbings, five resulting in fatalities. The petition calls for mandatory prison sentences for possession of an offensive weapon.

● Visit [change.org](https://change.org) to sign the petition.

## INSIDE

### BRENDA HAS GOT THE BEAT



PAGE 21

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2 CONTENTS

PETER RHODES	6
LETTERS	7
MEMORY LANE	14
LIFESTYLE	18
TV GUIDE	24-26
BRAIN GYM	27
MOTORING	33-34
SPORT	35-36
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# Etheridge: it's my time to lead UKIP



Bill Etheridge - leadership bid

WEST Midlands Euro MP Bill Etheridge has announced his intention to stand for the leadership of UKIP, vowing to transform the Black Country into a post-Brexit industrial powerhouse.

The MEP, who is also a Sedgley councillor, said his party needed 'a new lease of life' following 18 months of turmoil which has seen the party go through four leaders. Now Mr Etheridge insists: 'It's my time to lead.'

It came as Henry Bolton's short reign came to an end when he was sacked by a members' vote at an emergency meeting of UKIP in Birmingham on Saturday.

Mr Etheridge said: "I am now actively sounding people out for support and I have already had a lot of people contact me saying it is time for me to stand."

"I believe that this is the right time for me and to make sure we have a West Midlands-based leader of a national party for a change."

"I want UKIP to have a strong focus on a manufacturing renaissance for the country. We'll be looking at bringing back those traditional jobs to the UK that we have lost over a period of decades in changes that have badly hurt the West Midlands."

"Post-Brexit we will be looking at making the Black Country an industrial powerhouse again."

Mr Bolton had been given a vote of no confidence by the ruling NEC after he refused to cut ties with Jo Marney - his 25-year-old former girlfriend who sent racist texts about Prince Harry's fiancée Meghan Markle.

Mr Etheridge added: "He was an absolute disaster and had to go."

Gerard Batten acts as UKIP's interim leader for the next 90 days, the party's eighth leader since Nigel Farage resigned after the EU referendum.

# I worry most about burying my little boy



"THERE is no way to describe it. The hope of there being something, anything, that can help is what you cling onto as a parent."

The heartbreaking words of Rebekah Collins, who has been told her five-year-old son Ben has just months to live.

What started with a swollen finger resulted in Ben being diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma, a form of cancer, at the age of three.

Since then, Rebekah and husband Lee, from Brierley Hill, have tried everything to try to help their son beat the disease.

They were even dealt the cruellest of blows after Ben went into remission last year following an initially successful medical trial - only for the cancer to return.

Another trial failed, leaving them with no more options and experts have said Ben has between two and six months to live.

## Assessment

The first sign something was wrong came in August 2015 when Ben's finger swelled up - but never did Rebekah suspect Ben could be seriously ill.

She said: "I thought he hasn't hurt himself or caught it in anything so I took him to out-of-hours and got sent to a paediatrician for an assessment."

Tests were carried and in March 2016 the Brockmoor Primary School pupil was diagnosed.

Rebekah said: "The room closed in. I was nervous anyway because it was only a couple of days earlier they set up the appointment. But it didn't occur to me it could be cancer. It's the last thing you think."

The full-time mother, who also volunteers at her son's school, described

Five-year-old Ben Collins from Brierley Hill who was diagnosed with Ewings cancer with his mother Rebekah

the gut-wrenching moment the couple were told there was no hope left.

She said: "To be told your little boy you have given birth to, made every choice in his interests and put him through so much and it hasn't worked, you think 'why?'"

The devastated parents are now focusing on enjoying what time they have left with their son. Friends have rallied around and taken on the heartbreaking mission of raising funds for Ben's funeral.

"I hit a very distinct low point. What I worry about most is I won't be able to afford to bury my child with dignity. I have had to look at the costs of it - it's the sort of thing you have to prepare yourself for. I want to give him the best I possibly can."

## Awareness

Rebekah is now determined to raise awareness of the importance of bone marrow and blood donations in order to give sick children and adults

a fighting chance of beating such diseases. She said: "We need people to sign up to the bone marrow register and to give blood. It is the two things children and adults need."

Donations have already started flooding in after a crowdfunding page was launched. A total of £700 has been raised so far, with a target of £4,000 having been set. Donations can be made at [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/amyjayne-clark](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/amyjayne-clark) website.

# Councils send in bailiffs to recover over £20m debt

COUNCILS in the Black Country and Staffordshire called in bailiffs to collect debts of more than £21 million over the last two and a half years, figures show.

From 2015, six local authorities used debt collectors on 161,471 occasions, with council tax arrears accounting for 65 per cent of cases.

A Freedom of Information request provided figures for the four Black Country councils, Lichfield District Council and South Staffordshire District Council.

Liberal Democrats in the West Midlands have called on all Labour-run councils to scrap a policy they say picks on 'the poorest and most vulnerable'. But local authorities say they have a duty to collect taxes in order to protect vital services.

Dudley Council was under Labour control until May last year when the Conservatives took over. The Labour-run authority sent out bailiffs 30,688 times to collect £7.4m.

Labour-run Wolverhampton City Council used bailiffs on 34,620 occasions to recover £4m worth of debts.

## Fines

Labour-controlled Walsall Council used bailiffs 48,733 times from April 2015 to December 2017, bringing in £5.97m. Council tax accounted for 73 per cent of cases, while bailiffs were also sent out to collect arrears from parking fines and business rates.

Sandwell Council, also Labour, sent out debt collectors on 40,716 occasions over the same period but did not reveal how much money it had brought in.

Tory-run Lichfield District Council used bailiffs 2,903 times to collect £2.1m, and South Staffordshire District Council brought in £1.46m from 3,811 bailiff visits.

Paul Butters, a Liberal Democrat campaigner in the West Midlands, said: "Labour run councils are using people who knock on doors and take away people's possessions. They need to look at the way they collect their debt."

"We need our councils to vastly decrease their use of bailiffs."

A spokesman for the Department for Communities and Local Government said: "We expect councils to show sympathy for people in genuine hardship and only use bailiffs as a last resort."

"However, every penny of council tax that is not collected means a higher bill for those law-abiding citizens who do pay on time."

# New LED street lights on the way

NEW street lights will be rolled out across Dudley. Environmentally-friendly LED lighting will be fitted on major roads over the next two years. Bosses had hoped to start the replacement last year but struggled to find the right bulbs.

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## 'Vultures' are now targeting steel pensions

A MAJOR pensions mis-selling scandal has seen British Steel Pension Scheme (BSPS) members 'shamelessly bamboozled', say MPs.

The Work and Pensions Committee said it had received worrying evidence about financial advice provided to members of the BSPS, which includes hundreds in the Black Country.

While only a handful of steel industry sites remain – in Wednesfield, Wednesbury, Walsall and Brierley Hill – a decade ago there were a dozen employing more than a thousand people. Many of them are signed up to the British Steel Pension Scheme. Nationwide, the scheme still had 122,000 members last year.

But the committee says BSPS members had over the past year 'been exploited for cynical personal gain by dubious financial advisers in tandem with parasitical so-called introducers'.

Steelworkers yet to reach pension age were encouraged to transfer their defined benefit pension rights into a defined contribution pension, known as making a DB transfer. Such transfers may offer people reader access to cash and can be in the interests of people with a low life expectancy. But transferring away from a DB pension or a 'final salary' scheme is not usually in someone's interests, the committee said, as it means giving up generous and stable benefits in favour of a riskier investment.

The report states: "The circumstances surrounding the BSPS created perfect conditions for vultures to take advantage. Another major mis-selling scandal is already erupting."

## Man is rescued from under car

A MAN was trapped beneath a car after a two-vehicle crash near Halesowen.

Emergency services were called to reports of the collision outside Bluebird Park on Bromsgrove Road, Romsley.

One of the cars had overturned and a man was trapped underneath.

The crash happened just before 7pm on Monday and a paramedic officer, ambulance crew and a MERIT trauma doctor attended the scene.

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman Claire Brown said: "A man, thought to be the driver, was trapped beneath the overturned car and was in a serious condition."

"Ambulance staff worked to treat the man, who had suffered a number of serious injuries, while the fire service worked around them to carefully release him from the wreckage."

"Once freed, which took around 30 minutes, the man was given advanced pain relief and other trauma treatment before being taken by land ambulance on blue lights to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham."

# Father killed in late night gate tragedy



Chris Brookes, aged 22

A YOUNG father plunged 40ft to his death trying to climb over a faulty gate at a bus station, an inquest heard.

Chris Brookes mistakenly believed an outdoor gate was locked and decided to scramble over it after becoming trapped between two fire exits at Wolverhampton bus station.

But the Dudley-born man slipped and plummeted onto a bus lane of Wolverhampton ring road below.

The 22-year-old's death came just six months after another man almost died trying to scale the same gate, Black Country Coroner's Court heard.

Fire safety inspector Stephen Clegg told the inquest: "I don't believe that gate was locked. When I looked, I concluded it was faulty. There's a knack. If you don't hit it right, it appears locked."

### Report

Black Country Coroner Zafar Siddique, who recorded a conclusion of accidental death on Mr Brookes said he will now write a Preventing Future Deaths report.

Mr Brookes, from Oldbury, had been out celebrating brother Craig Brookes' birthday but got separated from the group.

His brother told the inquest Mr Brookes, an assemer at Elita Fans in Kingswinford, was probably trying to get home when he ended up at the bus station at 2am on October 29.

He suffered a fractured skull, ribs, spine and arm in the fall onto Ring Road St Patricks and was bleeding heavily in the brain and died as a result of a head trauma, pathologist Dr Paul Hiley said.

Mr Brookes, who died before partner Sarah Jayne Collins gave birth to his second child, had taken a small amount of cocaine and had 108mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood.

# Addict stole car then fell asleep at the wheel

A DRUG addict who committed a car key burglary the day after his release from prison is back behind bars.

But Scott Tandy's mother is standing by him despite spending her own money in a failed bid to rid him of the ruinous habit, a judge heard.

She is prepared to fund another course of treatment for the serial offending 38-year-old when he is set free again, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The defendant was high on heroin and Diazepam when he slipped into a flat at the Fairfield Inn at Fairfield Road, Halesowen, and stole the keys to the occupant's car, explained Miss Alison Scott-Jones, prosecuting.

But Tandy just drove the Nissan Juke to the other side of the street where the owner found him lying fast asleep across the steering wheel shortly after realising his car was missing.

### Convictions

She quickly grabbed the ignition key and alerted police who arrested Tandy. He could not remember what had happened and was either unwilling or unable to give blood for drug testing.

Miss Scott-Jones continued: "He has a very long list of previous convictions involving acquisitive crime and had just been released from prison the day before the offence."

Mr David Jaffa, defending, said Tandy's mother had paid for a course aimed at getting her son off drugs two years ago and was prepared to do the same again after his relapse to give him a chance of survival.

Tandy, from Kingswood Road, Nuneaton pleaded guilty to burglary and refusing to give a specimen for analysis and was jailed for six months with an 18 month driving ban on release.

Recorder Abigail Nixon told him: "There would have been problems for pedestrians and other road users if you had taken the car any further. Your drug taking has ruined not only your own life but that of your mother who has been pushed to the limit."

## Nursery helped in Kristie's memory



Baggie Bird supported the team shirt swap to raise money for an African nursery in memory of Kristie Rose

A FUNDRAISING day dedicated to an Albion fan who tragically died raised hundreds of pounds to support a nursery which has opened in Africa in her memory.

A foundation was set up in memory of Kristie Rose, aged 22, from Rowley Regis, following her death in 2016.

The foundation aims to raise

money for the Kristie Rose Children's Centre in Malawi, which was launched by her best friend Jordan Goodridge, and improve awareness of mental health issues.

Family and friends are determined to keep her memory alive by supporting the nursery. Kristie was a huge Albion fan and

had played for the ladies' team. An event at Brickhouse Primary School, where her mother Andrea works, helped raise £850 to buy equipment for nursery.

Albion fan Andrea was sponsored to wear a Wolves shirt while colleague Carla Newby, a Wolves fan, put on the blue and white stripes.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Fowl play for KFC in delivery crisis

KFC has been forced to temporarily close several outlets or offer limited menus after a new delivery contract with DHL resulted in not enough chicken getting to the restaurants.

"We've brought a new delivery partner onboard, but they've had a couple of teething problems – getting fresh chicken out to 900 restaurants across the country is pretty complex!" KFC said. "No deliveries has meant some of our restaurants are closed and others are operating a limited menu, or shortened hours." DHL said: "Due to operational issues a number of deliveries in recent days have been incomplete or delayed."

### Welsh quake gives region the jitters

A MINOR earthquake which struck south Wales was felt across the Black Country on Saturday afternoon.

The 4.4 magnitude quake struck approximately 20km (12.5 miles) north-east of Swansea at a depth of 7.4km, the British Geological Survey said.

Thousands experienced the 2.30pm tremor, said the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre, with people feeling it up to 300 miles from the epicentre.

The British Geological Survey said earthquakes of this magnitude happen in the UK every two to three years.

### Top TV comedians headline Fitz Fest

TV comics Paul Sinha and Seann Walsh will headline a comedy festival being held in Stourbridge.

They are among 13 professional acts who will perform as part of Fitz Fest in the marquee at Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, from June 7 to June 10.

Award-winning comic Sinha, who is best known as The Sinnerman on ITV teatime quiz show The Chase, will headline opening night on June 7. Walsh has appeared on Live At The Apollo and Mock The Week, and will close the festival on June 10. Tickets at [www.skiddle.com/e/13150821](http://www.skiddle.com/e/13150821)

### Rugby club showcase for 'pre-loved' dresses

STOURBRIDGE Rugby Club are presenting their very first 'Pre-Loved Dress' event where a selection of prom dresses, evening gowns, handbags and accessories will be for sale.

The event at the Bridgnorth Road club will be from 7pm on Wednesday (February 28) with admission £2 (£1 for under 16s). A selection of dresses will be featured in a catwalk show at 7.45pm. Call (01384) 395000 or e mail [events@stourbridgerugby.com](mailto:events@stourbridgerugby.com)

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The teams and Anna's family line-up before the game at Lye Town on Sunday, which raised £6,000 Photos: Tim Sturgess



Baggie Bird helped a linesman



Lee Naylor with his eyes on the ball



Rob Edwards in action



Jody Craddock takes a breather and chats with supporters

# All Stars are in action to help Isla

**AN ALL-STAR football team turned out for a charity match at Lye Town FC and raised £6,000 to help fund cancer treatment for a two-year-old girl.**

Ex-Wolves players Joleon Lescott, Jody Craddock and Lee Naylor were among the pros that turned out for West Midlands All Stars against Dormston School Old Boys match.

Some 500 people turned out to watch the

game on Sunday and help pay for Isla Austin to fly to America for treatment.

She is in remission but it is hoped the new treatment will help stop her from getting cancer again. Youngsters with neuroblastoma – the same disease which tragic young Sunderland fan Bradley Lowery suffered from – have a 50 per cent chance of a relapse

Her mother Anna, aged 37, who went to Dormston School in Sedgley, said: "She was diagnosed with cancer on her first birthday.

She had chemotherapy, a stem cell transplant, radiotherapy and seven and a half hour operation in surgery.

"But now she has been given the all clear which is brilliant. To get on this trial you have to be all clear. She has a 50 per cent chance of re-lapsing and after that a 10 per cent survival chance.

"The clinical trial is supposed to help reduce the chances of re-lapsing. It has shown good results and lot's of children are going for it.

"As a parent you have to do everything you can for your child and this is our only option."

The cost of the trip will be £155,000. Anna has been supported by family and friends in reaching the target.

She plans to fly out to New York this week to the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. The charity football match helped to raise the final total needed.

The West Midlands All Stars, managed by former Wolves goalkeeper Matt Murray, who

is a friend of Isla's family, won 5-1. Other star names included Rob Edwards, Mo Camara, James Chambers, Dele Adebola and Deon Burton. Anna's husband Rick, 39, turned out for the opposition.

Murray, who lived with Anna's aunt and uncle from 1997 to 2003 in Penn, after leaving school, helped to organise the game and bring in the pros.

Anna added: "I want to thank everyone for their support.

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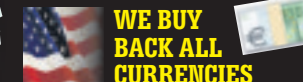
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## MP asks for report on death in night club

AN MP has written to the Government's Attorney General after a man accused of killing amateur footballer Ryan Passey was acquitted.

Kobe Murray, aged 19, of The Broadway, Dudley, walked free from court after being cleared of murder and manslaughter.

Mr Passey, 24, from Quarry Bank, died after being stabbed in the Chicago's nightclub in Stourbridge last August.

Stourbridge MP Margot James has now written to Attorney General Robert Buckland.

Mr Murray admitted stabbing the victim but said it happened accidentally as he went to push him away.

Conservative MP Ms James wrote: "I would like to request a full report from the Crown Prosecution Service that I might be able to share with Ryan's family."

"I would also be grateful if you could arrange for the investigating officer to meet Ryan's family so that they can discuss what actions may be available to them."

The Crown Prosecution Service has said it is unlikely more charges would be brought as Mr Murray has been cleared of any wrongdoing – unless compelling new evidence comes to light. A campaign to raise funds for any future legal costs has been suggested by friends of the family.

## Male choir and army band joining forces

CRADLEY Heath Salvation Army and Cradley Heath Male Voice Choir have a joint concert on March 3.

The venue is the Citadel at Meredith Street, Cradley Heath, and tickets cost £5 including refreshments.

To book, call David Cornell on (01384) 393 067. The Salvation Army Office on (01384) 563570.

The choir is celebrating its 106th anniversary.

# Trendy Fiat Abarth 595s are being targeted by car thieves

## Volunteers look for otters on Stour



Biodiversity and planning officer Hannah Lewis, front, with volunteers looking for otters on the River Stour

VOLUNTEERS have been out across the region searching for otters.

The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country has been looking for the animals to find out how many are now living by our rivers. Otter numbers have risen nationally and the trust is looking for see if that rise has been reflected locally on the River Stour.

Biodiversity and Planning Officer

Hannah Lewis said: "Where there is evidence of otter populations we will know that the Stour is in good health, conversely absence of evidence will help us plan improvement works."

"A healthy river is important for wildlife but for us too. Clean rivers mean clean rain and fewer pollutants in our food chain."

The project is part of Salmon in the Stour, a partnership between the En-

vironment Agency, The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the Severn Rivers Trust, covering the whole of the River Stour catchment.

Once an important industrial watercourse, today the Stour acts as a vital 'green and blue corridor' bringing wildlife into the urban Black Country. It is a tributary of the River Severn with its source in the Clent Hills

**THIEVES** are targeting souped-up version of a trendy modern classic – the Fiat Abarth 595.

Nine of the vehicles, a performance model of the Fiat 500 and priced from £17,000, were stolen in the Black Country in January.

Another standard Fiat 500 was taken from a property in Stafford. Many victims said their vehicles were taken without keys or smashed glass.

Police recently highlighted the use of relay devices that push signals from electronic car keys to vehicles parked outside. Thieves have made use of the high-tech gadgets to steal valuable cars without having to force entry.

West Midlands Police confirmed nine Abarth 595s had been stolen in the Black Country in the first month of this year.

They were taken in Walsall, Oldbury, Halesowen, Smethwick, Stourbridge, Brierley Hill, Tipton, Dudley and Wednesbury.

### Precautions

But a spokesman for the force, which is investigating each one of the reported thefts, said the crimes were not being linked. Vehicle crime in the West Midlands shot up 32 per cent to 35,671 incidents in the 12 months up to September last year – almost 100 a day.

Simon Williams, spokesman for the RAC Foundation, said the appeal of the high-powered Abarth 595 may mean criminals were stealing them to order. He said: "Owners need to take extra precautions, while police need to clamp down on vehicle thefts."

Dave and Simone Beebe had their navy blue Abarth stolen from their driveway in Ellway Street in Wednesbury in the early hours of January 29.

The vehicle was bought only two months earlier from an Arnold Clark dealership in Oldbury and had just



Nine Fiat Abarth 595s were stolen in January across the Black Country

over 500 miles on the clock. When it was stolen the keys were still inside their house. Mr Beebe said: "It all seems too much of a coincidence."

Kate Darke's vehicle was stolen from her address in Stourbridge Road in Dudley sometime between midnight on January 13 and midday the following day. It was recovered on January 28 and is undergoing forensic analysis.

Justin Westnedge, from Abarth UK, said: "The Abarth 595 is being constantly upgraded for safety and security." A police spokesman suggested owners consider a steering wheel lock.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



# Handouts of £10k? Why it just won't work

A THOUGHT-provoking report by the Royal Society for the Arts suggests unemployment benefit, child benefit and tax credits should all be stopped, and instead everybody under the age of 55 should receive a one-off handout of £10,000.

Well, to be precise, it is actually proposing two payments of £5,000 each, which could be funded by new taxes on social media giants such as Facebook and Apple.

Now aside from the question about why the over-55s are excluded – discrimination surely? – the proposal will no doubt prove pretty popular with those who are eligible. An extra 10 grand in the back pocket, paid for by global fat cats? What's not to like?

While its title might suggest it is predominantly concerned with opera houses and art galleries, the RSA is actually a serious champion of social reform, with a distinguished history of coming up with radical ideas. Previous fellows include Charles Dickens, Benjamin Franklin, free-market economist Adam Smith and the, er Marxist, Karl Marx, so it encompasses a diverse range of intellectual talent. But while the idea will no doubt stimulate debate, you don't need to be Stephen Hawking – another former fellow – to see why it won't work.

When the Government starts doling out £10,000 bounties to all and sundry, the recipients will inevitably fall into two categories. There will be those who diligently take advice and carefully invest the money in a diverse portfolio of savings, stocks and shares, pensions, and insurance, knowing they may need something to call on for a rainy day.

Then there will be those who will go out and buy a giant flat-screen telly, the latest smartphone – probably made by one of the hated tech giants that the scheme was set up to target and an expensive games console. Next they will book a fortnight's holiday in Benidorm (keeping back a few hundred quid for lager, naturally). And if there's anything left at the end, it will be used as a down-payment to buy a new car on the never-never.

A few years down the line when it all goes pear-shaped, those who have put a bit away will find their investments have been eroded by inflation, not helped by the Government's decision to give everyone a 10-grand handout.

And those who wasted the money? Cue doleful pictures in sympathetic tabloids, and stories about life on the breadline because the Government stopped unemployment benefit, child benefit and tax credits.

## Needs to be visible but out of reach of the wreckers



Steve Coogan – back as Alan Partridge. A masterpiece but beaten by The Trip



David Davis – caught up in the everyday haggling over the Brexit deal



Enoch Powell – would be wrong to say that we warned to each other

# I'm torn over push for Enoch plaque

I AM torn on this campaign to erect a blue plaque in Wolverhampton to commemorate the city's most significant MP, Enoch Powell. It would be a target for vandals, unless it could be placed somewhere in the city where it would be visible, but not visible enough to cause offence, and was well out of reach of wreckers. Pity they demolished the old Goodyear Chimney. I only interviewed Enoch Powell once. It would be wrong to say we warned to each other.

A READER points out that, if you give the charity Water Aid £2 a month it can supply water to a family in scorching-dry Africa. So why does Severn-Trent demand £38 a month from him to do much the same in a country where, as he puts it, "it pees down with rain two days out of five on average?" Fair point.

BREXIT - An Everyday Story of Hagglers. In this week's episode M. Barnier says Britain must make up its mind what it wants. Mr Davis says, thanks, Michel, we'll have this. M. Barnier says, non, you cannot have that. Just like last week. Just like next week.

STEVE Coogan is returning to telly with a new series, This Time with Alan Partridge. We can expect another excellent slice of cringe-comedy. And yet, while Partridge is a comic masterpiece, for my money the best thing Coogan ever did was The Trip (2010-2014) in which he and Rob Brydon toured Northern England and Europe, allegedly reviewing restaurants for an up-market Sunday newspaper. It was stressed that these were "fictionalised versions" of Coogan

## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



and Brydon, yet the insecurity and point-scoring of real-life thespians seemed genuine as they flirted with the staff and pitted their best Roger Moore and Sean Connery accents at each other over dinner. Brydon's conversation with one of the petrified corpses in Pompeii was one of the funniest things I've seen on telly, albeit it in very bad taste. So while it's good to see Partridge return, I'd rather see a new series of The Trip.

WE woke a few days ago to two depressingly familiar items of news. In Northern Ireland, time was yet again running out for a decision on forming a government. In Florida, kids were howling in grief after yet another American high-school massacre. The same old headlines keep coming around and it feels like living in a time-loop. Welcome to Groundhog Day.

COUNCIL tax looks set to rise. If the money is to be used for social care, who can complain? Yet doesn't it seem daft to bump council-tax bills up by £100 in April and give millions of us £100 back in winter-fuel allowance in November?

OUR changing language. Military terms once understood by millions of squaddies are a puzzle for Britain's younger generation. This ex-

plains a common error, as seen this week in a Daily Mail report about the unexploded device in London: "Navy divers work to diffuse massive 5ft long WWII bomb." Defuse, perhaps?

IN the great Peter Rabbit allergy debate, my sympathies are with the snowflakes. In a new animated film, Peter and his chums defeat their enemy Tom by pelting him with fruit to which he is allergic. A charity, Allergy UK, complained and took some flak on the lines of: "Oh, lighten up, snowflakes, it's only a joke." And then we learned more about the scene. The fruit brings on such a violent allergic reaction that Tom falls to the ground choking and turning red before stabbing himself with his life-saving Epi-Pen. Not so funny after all, is it? I bet we all know kids whose lives are blighted by severe allergy and who must carry their Epi-Pen at all times. The remarkable thing is that apparently at no stage in the production did any script editors, animators or stars see anything wrong in making a joke about anaphylactic shock. Some parents have called for the scene to be re-shot, so here's an hilarious alternative. The rabbits trick Tom into wearing striped pyjamas and put him on a train to somewhere called Belsen. Oh, lighten up, snowflakes, it's only a joke . . .

GOOD news. My long-term holiday haunt of Beer in Devon did not win Channel 4's Village of the Year competition. That honour went to Broughshane in County Antrim which I dare say will become a seething trippers' honeypot, allowing Beer to slip back into unjam-packed serenity.

TALKING POINT



# Turn-off as television is awash with soaps

SOME wives say they are golfing widows. Me, I'm a TV soaps widower.

Trouble is, while husbands disappear off to the par fours and, no doubt, soak up the atmosphere at the 19th hole, I'm stuck next to 'er indoors, being subjected to whatever minor, or major disaster has befallen one of the characters in Corrie, Emmerdale etc.

You used to know where you stood with what are now termed 'serial dramas', they were on one or two nights a week, one half hour at a time. That's to say, it was only 24 minutes or so, per night of dross to suffer, perhaps once or twice during the week. . . .

Not now – double-length episodes, or the dreaded "We'll be back in Weatherfield in half an hour."

And another thing. Conversation. If you do want to say something during the course of an episode, (I mean, how dare you), women – so-called experts of multi-tasking – press live pause on the remote. Oh no, there's no truck with actually talking in response and keeping a watchful eye on the programme – after all they might miss the nuance of a furrowed brow, or a pantomime grimace, or staring into space before the advert break.

I mean, really, could the acting get any worse? One bloke in Emmerdale is obviously an expert in crying, as that's all he does. Impressive, but surely there's something lacking in emotional range.

Then you've got Gail Platt's hairdresser son in Corrie – the perpetual frowner. I thought I was miserable, but he takes the biscuit!

But getting back to the live pause, when it is pressed, it's like a little part of me dies inside, as I know it will prolong the agony, as it takes even longer to watch!

Still, it could be worse, I mean there could be 20 backed-up episodes of Jeremy Kyle on the planner. Oh no, wait a minute, there are! So on the off chance that there is not a soap being shown, I get the delights of Shane and Demi's convoluted love-life being prodded and probed by Jezzzer in front of a highly amused audience.

I now know why they show decent films late at night on the box, it's for long-suffering fools like me who, after Pointless, Eggheads and maybe the news, don't get a look-in for the rest of the evening until their partner is in the land of nod.

Perhaps I'll start knitting, or maybe even, go out? Nah, I'll just suffer in silence, if only so she doesn't press the pause button again!

GRAEME ANDREW

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# Missed opportunity at accident blackspot

AFTER a long wait for something to be done, the traffic department of Dudley Council has eventually stirred into action over the accident blackspot on the junction of Gospel End Street and Vicar Street in Sedgley. There are an average of seven accidents per year at this junction – and that's just those that are notified to the council.

Alas it looks like the main cause of accidents has been ignored – vehicles travelling too fast up the hill at Gospel End Street and rounding the bend into Vicar Street, colliding with vehicles emerging from Gospel End Street..

## Solution for congestion at hospital

I had to go to Russells Hall Hospital on Tuesday afternoon. I travelled from the Merry Hill centre direction. When we got to the Holly Hall traffic lights the traffic was at a standstill.

At peak times this entrance into the hospital car park just won't take the sheer volume of traffic. In my opinion a simple solution would solve it.

It needs a second access further towards Pensnett. It just needs the construction of an access to the car park and presumably a barrier. This would take pressure off this bottleneck island.

When we got to this roundabout it took a further 20 minutes to get into the car park. We finally parked and when we came out of the hospital two hours later, had the same problem trying to get out of the car park.

Working out how much money they are pulling in every day, it would be easy to sort out this problem.

**BOB WHITEHOUSE**  
Kingswinford

Plans for the works appeared in Sedgley Library on the Saturday before roadworks began on Monday morning, making a mockery of public consultation. The council excused themselves by claiming the measures are 'interim' and as such do not merit public discussion. 'Rumble strips' have been laid to slow down vehicles coming from the Bull Ring, but this isn't the main cause of collision.

Although they are unpopular with motorists, speed bumps are the only way to slow vehicles down rounding the corner into Vicar Street. The bumps in

School Road Wombourne outside Benedict Biscop School are a good example of their effective use.

They are due to realign the junction between Gospel End Street and Bush Bank but the problem of speed on the main thoroughfare will remain and it's unlikely to reduce collisions.

This is a huge missed opportunity and waste of valuable resources. Motorists would be well advised to exercise great caution at the junction and lobby for speed bumps to be installed.

**MARTIN JONES**  
Sedgley

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

## Don't be sentimental for eyesore

I read last week that supporters to reopen Dudley Hippodrome have "worked really hard on the project" and that campaigners will now try to get listed status for the former theatre to protect it from demolition.

I count about 23 people protesting for it to be saved on the photo last week, it hasn't got the support from the majority of Dudley folk!

Most people who have signed to save it probably did so out of sentimentality. However, the building is a shocking disgrace, it's an eyesore that is blighting a marvellous castle. Even with a million pounds spent on it, it will still look like a brick box from three sides and maybe half presentable from the front.

Please could those involved use their energy on worthwhile projects. Let this die gracefully, the memories are far better than any promises in the future.

**MR LEE**  
Holly Hall

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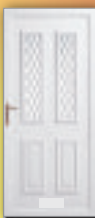
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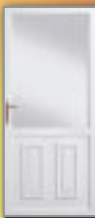
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# Group channels efforts towards TV station move

**THE West Midlands has been described as a 'broadcaster's dream' by campaigners who are calling on Channel 4 to relocate its headquarters from London to the region.**

Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor, is leading efforts to attract the channel to the region after the Government said it should move to benefit talent across the UK.

The West Midlands has been put forward as a potential home for the channel, which was launched in 1982, with Coventry, Birmingham, Dudley and Solihull vying with Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Bristol.

## Recordings

Campaigners pitched their cases in live recordings from Birmingham, Coventry and West Bromwich, where, at the YMCA base in Carters Green, The Chronicle's sister publication The Express & Star hosted a 10-minute recording for Twitter and Facebook.

It featured West Bromwich-based Creative Black Country's creative director Parminder Dosanjh, Creative Academics Network chief executive Jerrel Jackson, Raised by Wolves actor Theo Johnson and Smethwick-based hip-hop artist Malik Harrison, aka MalikMD7.

Ms Dosanjh had led projects like 100 Masters, which promotes local talent while celebrating the Black Country's history. She said: "The question is, why shouldn't Channel 4 come to the West Midlands? It is rich, its exciting, its diverse and I think it is a broadcaster's dream."

Mr Jackson's group showcases talent in the region. He said local talent should not have to travel to London



**From left, Jerrel Jackson, chief executive of Creative Academies, rapper Malik MD7, actor Theo Johnson and Parminder Dosanjh, creative director at Creative Black Country**

to get a platform. He played Callum in the Channel 4 series co-written by Caitlin Moran and got the job from an audition in the West Midlands.

He said: "There's loads of talent, loads of young, hungry people who are ready to be involved in something and just need a platform. Channel 4 brings credibility and will help immensely." As part of the live recording Malik per-

formed a minute-long prose on growing up in the Black Country.

He said: "The West Midlands would be a great place to develop our talent which would not have to travel to develop - our talent is right here."

Mr Street said bringing Channel 4 to the region would generate £2.3 billion of gross value added between 2021 and 2030.

# Subbuteo figure tribute to Cyrille

WEST Bromwich legend Cyrille Regis has been immortalised with special edition Subbuteo figures handmade by a talented Baggies fan.

The new figures are Paul Ridler's personal tribute to the legendary Albion number nine who died last month from a suspected heart attack at the age of 59.

There was an outpouring of grief for the player, who won the FA Cup with Coventry City and also played for Aston Villa and Wolves and won five England caps, during a career which helped forge the way for black footballers.

Thousands of supporters, former players and managers attended a memorial service at The Hawthorns following a private family funeral.

Mr Ridler is donating the proceeds of any sales to charity.

## Degrees

The 41-year-old has made one of his hero in familiar pose smashing home a goal while another shows him with Albion team-mates Brendan Batson and the late Laurie Cunningham – who were famously known as the Three Degrees.

Mr Ridler, the great-grandson of England and Albion legend Billy Bassett, makes the wooden miniatures from his home in Oxfordshire and posts pictures on Twitter @subbute legends.

He has been making and selling them for the last year and has captured classic moments like Maradona's Hand of God moment against England in the 1986 World Cup and Eric Can-

But it's the Albion figures that hold a special place in his heart. Other Baggies creations include one of former Hawthorns favourite Jonas Olsson cel-



### Cyrille Regis in familiar pose



### Figures of Albion's Three Degrees



**Paul's great-grandfather Billy Bassett** celebrating his goal against rivals Wolves in a 5-1 win during 2012. He has also made one of his great-grandfather in his England kit.



### Jonas Olsson in Subbuteo form

ures from my childhood. I did not want to make money on the Cyrille Regis one and the money went to the Water Aid Charity.

"I have got to do one coat of paint at a time and I usually charge £25 a piece."



# Rally of unity to prove 'Rivers of Blood' wrong

IAN Austin will host an anti-racism rally to mark the 50th anniversary of Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech – and to celebrate a better Britain.

The Dudley North MP will host the event at Birmingham's Burlington Hotel – formerly the Midland Hotel – which is where Powell delivered his incendiary speech at a Conservative Association meeting on April 19, 1968.

Mr Austin says he is inviting a number of as yet unnamed 'high profile speakers' from across the country to address the rally. He hopes that 'hundreds of people will come together to celebrate how Britain has got better over the last 50 years'.

Mr Austin said: "This was a shameful speech that caused great division, presented a terrible image of the Black Country and even resulted in people being attacked.

## Skin

"Powell divided communities based on the colour of people's skin, he wanted immigrants to leave the country and predicted race wars and blood on the streets. His terrible predictions have never become true. Instead, the West Midlands is home to communities in which people from different countries, backgrounds and cultures work and live together harmoniously.

"People from all over the world have made a huge contribution to community life, to our NHS and other public services and, by setting up businesses and creating jobs, our economy too – so I'm inviting speakers from across the country and people from around the region to join me as we celebrate all the ways Britain has got better over



**Dudley North MP Ian Austin plans an anti-racism rally on the anniversary** the last 50 years. Let's celebrate how Britain has got better, not commemorate division," said the Labour MP.

Powell was the Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South West from 1950 to 1974. In the controversial speech he referred to a conversation he claimed to have had with a constituent, who told him that mass immigration into Britain would eventually see 'the black man have the whip hand over the white man'.

He concluded that failing to address the issue of immigration would be 'the great betrayal'.

Mr Austin's announcement comes



**Enoch Powell made his Rivers of Blood speech in April 1968 in Birmingham** after the Wolverhampton's Civic and Historical Society announced it had received an application to erect a plaque to Enoch Powell, who died in 1998, from an unnamed person.

Classical scholar Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' reference is an allusion to a line from Virgil's Aeneid. He said: "As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood."

The society's panel is set to decide next year if the plaque gets the go-ahead. Mr Austin's event takes place at 6pm on April 19 at the Burlington Hotel, New Street.

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Students learning to read a medical chart in order to track the patient's vital signs in the Sim Ward

and career-focused advantages that will prepare them for both higher education and employment; gaining nationally-recognised qualifications alongside hands-on project learning with healthcare professionals.

"We are now accepting applications from young people living in Birmingham, Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Solihull who would like to join

us as Year 10 or Year 12 students in September 2018."

If you are interested in pursuing a career in healthcare, you are invited to come along to the open evening to find out more about how studying with Health Futures UTC could prepare you for an exciting career. The open evening takes place on Tuesday, February 27 between 5:30pm and 7:30pm.

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## Firm will stay after traveller fears eased

**BOSSSES** at a distribution firm have said they are 'reassured' a new temporary travellers transit site will not impact business.

Commercial Body Fittings in Coseley has now lodged expansion plans with Dudley Council which could see 40 jobs created.

The firm's managing director Mark Negri had previously suggested CBF, which employs 30 people at its base in Budden Road, might be forced to move as a result of the transit site being created nearby. But after a meeting with Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley, bosses have been convinced the transit site will not have a negative impact on their business.

The transit site in Budden Road is being created because its existence will make it easier for the council to move on illegal encampments across the borough. It currently costs the council £150,000 a year in clean-up operations and legal fees to move them on. Adopting a transit site will give the authority increased powers.

Mr Negri said: "It was pleasing that the leader of the council contacted us directly. We have been reassured sufficiently to commit to staying here and to press ahead with our exciting expansion plans."

## So whoo's your friend Minister?



Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson admire one of the owls

**WHAT** a hoot! Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson met up with volunteers from the World Owl Trust and some feathered friends. The South Staffordshire MP, who is a member and patron of the trust, popped into its temporary home.

The Kinver MP visited Rodbaston Animal Zone at South Staffordshire College, where 70 owls are being temporarily housed at the site until the trust's new base at Himley Park has been built.

Delays with historical excavations being carried out on behalf of the West Midlands Historic Building Trust mean an opening date for the new site has yet to be set. Volunteers are hopeful it will be operational by next spring.

Alan Pearce, chairman of the board of trustees, said: "Even with his very demanding parliamentary job which takes up a lot of his time, Gavin is very supportive in his role as a patron of the World Owl Trust."

Mr Williamson said: "I am always so impressed to hear how hard volunteers work to care for the owls and I was pleased to hear that progress is being made at the new site in Himley Park."

## Hundreds more school places being created

**HUNDREDS** of school places will be created after Sandwell Council chiefs backed plans for a new primary and expansion of a secondary school.

The primary school in Smethwick will create 420 new places while plans to make Q3 Academy in Oldbury bigger will also create capacity for hundreds more students.

The primary is planned for part of the existing Shireland Collegiate Academy site and nearby land in Wilson Road.

Bosses said it will eventually cater for 420 pupils and 'ensure the demand for extra school places is met'. Estimated costs for the 'state-of-the-art' school are likely to be around £4.5 million and it is set to open in September next year.

Sandwell Council was approached by the Government to build the primary school and will work on behalf of the Education, Skills and Funding Agency with the Collegiate Academy Trust, who already run Shireland Collegiate Academy in Smethwick, rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

# £23 per person – how cycling 'could ease burden of obesity'

**NEW research shows it could cost as little as £23 per person to ease the burden of treating obesity illnesses in the West Midlands.**

Every year the NHS spends around £5.1bn treating illnesses directly attributable to obesity – which equates to around £77 per person in the UK.

But a cycling development project

run by Cycling UK, and funded by the Department for Transport, resulted in 18,500 people cycling more regularly last year – for a cost of only £23.81 per person. The DfT has announced it will be funding the Big Bike Revival project for a fourth year with a £500,000 grant.

Paul Tuohy, chief executive of Cycling UK, said: "The Big Bike Revival represents incredible value for money,

and I'm delighted that the Department for Transport has recognised the significance of the project by funding it for another year so we can get more people cycling every day.

"It's not only the health benefits. More people cycling can only have a positive impact on our environment. Every year, it's estimated that air pollution costs the UK economy up to £10 billion."

## Justin time for more Timberlake tickets

**AMERICAN** pop superstar Justin Timberlake has added an extra Birmingham date to the UK leg of his The Man Of The Woods Tour this summer.

Tickets go on sale at 9am tomorrow (Friday) for JT's second consecutive concert at the city centre venue on June 28.

There has been huge demand for tickets to see the Tennessee-born singer who had hits with Can't Stop the Feeling! and SexyBack. He released his fourth studio album, Man Of The Woods, earlier this month and performed in front of a massive global audience as the halftime act during the American Super Bowl final.

Ticket prices start from £46.40, available via [www.theticketfactory.com](http://www.theticketfactory.com) or by calling 0844 3388222.

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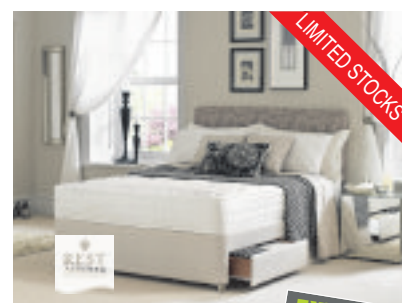
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From left, Cliff Easthope, Steve Furnival, Graham Page, and Reg Smith



Reg Smith is in the middle in this shot taken in Singapore in 1959



Reg Smith, right, during his time in Singapore in 1959



Cliff, third left, Reg, fourth left, and Graham, second from right



Memories – in perfect line-up on parade

# Forces friendship shaped us for the rest of our lives

**A FRIENDSHIP** formed six decades ago during National Service has stood the test of time.

The group was thrown together for eight weeks of training at Whittington Barracks back in 1958, and have never looked back, marking 60 years as pals with a meal out at the Broadway pub, Lichfield Road, New Invention.

'It shaped us for the rest of our lives.' Sixty years down the line, that is how four friends who met doing National Service summed up their training. Reg Smith, of Bilston, Graham Page, of Kingswinford, Cliff Easthope, of Tipton, and Steve Furnival, who lives in Stoke, were just 19 when they got to know each other.

They spent time in post-war Ger-

**Report by David Cosgrove**

many and then the Far East together. Mr Easthope said: "We all first met up in February 1958 in Lichfield, that's where we started our training."

"I remember getting off the train from Tipton or Wolverhampton and Steve got off the train coming from Stoke."

## Names

"The sergeant shouted our names out and we got onto a lorry together and we've been mates ever since. I wouldn't have changed it for anything. And I think everyone would say that it helped them in life."

After nearly two months of training, the four pals joined up with the South Staffordshire Regiment's First Battalion proper – Mr Easthope and Mr

Furnival in A Company and Mr Page and Mr Smith in C Company.

They travelled to Germany and were stationed in Luneburg until October before returning home. However, on their return in late 1958 the North and South Staffs Regiments amalgamated to become the Staffordshire Regiment.

The new combined regiment consisted of active soldiers only so those doing National Service were forced to move to another unit. Needing to serve another year to complete their training, the quartet were transferred to the Cheshire Regiment, and sent to the Far East.

They spent around a year in Singapore and Malaya – helping keep the peace during elections in the former which saw Singapore vote to self-govern for the first time.

Retired odd job man Mr Smith, 79, said: "It's good looking back, but you never realised at the time how good a time it was. It definitely shaped me for the rest of my

life. I think I would've been a bit different without the discipline we got right from the start of our training. We had discipline because of our National Service and that's what people lack today."

Mr Furnival, also 79, worked as a primary school teacher for 20 years before his retirement. He said: "They used to call me 'Jock' because I was from Stoke and they were all from the Black Country."

## Travelled

"I remember the first day well. We pulled into Lichfield Trent Valley station and the first bloke I met was Cliff, and he helped me get onto the truck."

"Training was normally six weeks but we did eight weeks because there was a short break for Easter."

Mr Furnival left as a full corporal, and his colleagues all Privates. The four have remained close and have travelled abroad with their wives who are also now friends.



The Clangers - proving very popular



Fozzie Bear – always smiling



Thunderbirds' Lady Penelope and Parker



Anne Quinton, from the gallery with Zippy and George from Rainbow



The Adventures of Rupert Bear



Boom! Boom! It's Basil Brush



Bagpuss taking pride of place



Elliott Edwards with the Prince Charles puppet from Spitting Image

# Puppet masters pop up in city

**COME** and see some of the most famous faces ever to appear on TV for free – no strings attached.

The one and only Bagpuss, Fozzie Bear from The Muppets, several Clangers, world-famous Thunderbirds Lady Penelope and Parker (M'lady) – and even Basil Brush (Boom! Boom!) have gone on show at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

They're all in town as part of a major new

exhibition looking at 80 years of puppets on TV. And as well as seeing these legends of the screen in the flesh – sorry, cloth – there's a host of fascinating facts and trivia on offer.

For instance, did you know that Bagpuss was originally meant to have orange stripes, but the fabric shop delivered pink material by accident.

As for the Clangers, the scripts were written in English then performed on swannee whistles to translate into the distinctive Clanger

language. The free display runs until April 29 and is already drawing big crowds to the Lichfield Street venue.

The exhibition is split into two parts, with one room displaying pieces from the 'Clangers, Bagpuss & Co tour' from the V&A Museum of Childhood. An adjoining room shows pieces from the exhibition 'TV Puppets: Icons From 80 Years of Entertainment'.

Among the gems on show is an original set and characters from Cloppa Castle and a gen-

uine 1952 Muffin the Mule marionette. There are also characters from Noggin the Nog and animation exhibitions behind Ivor the Engine. The collection was brought together by Michael Dixon, of the National Puppetry Archive who also works for the City of Wolverhampton College.

Zippy and George from Rainbow, Prince Charles' Spitting Image doll and Soko, the first puppet ever made for TV in 1930, also feature in the exhibition.

Visitors can revisit their childhood free of charge through viewing the colourful creations, as part of the display curated in partnership with the National Puppetry Archive.

Cultural exhibition programmer at the gallery Carol Thompson said people of all ages had been marvelling at the puppets.

She said: "People are absolutely loving it. You see them walking around just going 'wow'. All ages too. It's just so nostalgic. It's an absolute delight."





Youngsters taking part in the new 'A Mile for Joel' initiative that has been launched in the Black Country

# Mile for Joel is charity's new keep fit initiative

A NEW fitness challenge has been launched by a Black Country charity which was set up in memory of three terror victims.

'A Mile for Joel' sees youngsters urged to complete one mile of exercise - whether it is walking, running, swimming, cycling or any other activity.

The initiative has been organised by Smile for Joel, a charity set up to honour Joel Richards, Adrian Evans and Patrick Evans, who were killed in Tunisia in 2015.

Smile for Joel was set up by Joel's mother Suzy Evans and her son Owen to support other families who have been affected through similarly traumatic experiences. It has already raised more than £100,000 since it was set up.

A Smile for Joel statement says there are 'three excellent reasons' to take part.

"This is a fantastic activity which is inclusive for all ages/ability which helps towards their wellbeing."

## Funds

"This activity will support much-needed school funds and by supporting Smile for Joel you will be helping families affected by homicide."

A Mile for Joel was launched at St Mary's Primary in Wednesbury, where Joel was a former pupil. Children are asked to donate £2 to take part in the challenge with £1 going to their school and the other £1 to Smile for Joel. For more information visit [smileforjoel.com](http://smileforjoel.com) or [facebook.com/smileforjoel/](https://facebook.com/smileforjoel/)



Joel Richards - Tunisia terror victim

# Mother: Tunisia still not ready for tourists

A MOTHER who lost three family members in a terror attack in Tunisia says she is 'yet to be convinced' it is a safer place.

Thomas Cook has resumed flights to the country and British holidaymakers were flown out there last week the first time since 38 people were slaughtered by an IS-inspired gunman in 2015.

But Suzy Evans, from Wednesbury, who lost her son Joel, brother Adrian Evans and father Patrick Evans in the attack, said she was 'surprised' the airline had re-started flights to the north African nation when the terror threat was still considered to be high.

She urged tourists to get as much information as possible before heading there.

## Talented

Terrified holidaymakers fled as Seifeddine Rezgui fired indiscriminately on the beach in Sousse and followed into the hotel.

Thirty Britons were killed, including talented football referee Joel, 19, his grandfather Patrick, 78, and uncle Adrian, 44, a Sandwell Council worker from Bilston.

The hotel where the three family members were killed re-opened with a new name last year.

Despite assurances hotel security has been tightened, Miss Evans said she felt uncomfortable with the idea of tourists heading back to the beaches. She said: "I just hope people are going to read all the facts about the country."

"At the end of the day, people make their own decisions on whether they feel safe going on holiday but they just need to be aware of the full facts."



Patrick, Joel and Adrian



The hotel and beach attack scene



Think twice before flying - Joel's mother Suzy Evans with her son Owen

"At the moment, Tunisia is still in a state of emergency and the Foreign Office also says terrorists are very likely to carry out a terrorist attack. More importantly, the Tunisian trial still hasn't taken place."

And she said she was yet to be convinced that Tunisian hotels were safe from the threat of terror.

"Personally, I don't think Tunisia is ready but customers have to make their own decisions and weigh it up," she said.

Miss Evans added: "I am surprised they are offering flights to a destination where 38 people were slaughtered on the beach. I'm shocked people are going."

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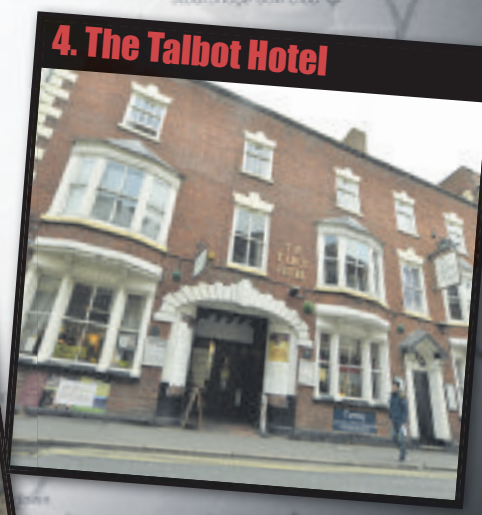
## 3. Gibbet Lane



**The Talbot Hotel**

**4**

## 4. The Talbot Hotel



**F**rom a haunted hotel room to strange mists and feelings of being watched – there are plenty of ghostly goings-on in and around Stourbridge.

In this week's edition we talk with expert Andrew Homer – author of *Black Country Ghosts and Hauntings* – to find out more about some of the reportedly haunted landmarks.

### Drakelow Tunnels

It began life as a shadow factory for British Leyland during the Second World War producing aero engines.

During the Cold War Drakelow Tunnels became a nuclear bomb shelter designated as Regional Seat of Government 9.

It is possible to visit the tunnels at times and it is hoped it will some day be turned into a museum.

The tunnels were originally dug out of sandstone – explosives were used to blast out more than three miles of the underground complex and not without serious accidents.

One of the worst on record took place in October of 1941 when a roof collapsed in tunnel one and killed three men.

In the tunnels themselves 1940s war music has been heard – and when the source of the music is tracked it immediately stops.

Strange mists have been reported to descend on tunnel four and on one occasion a caretaker's two German Shepherds were transfixed by a misty figure in the tunnel.

The dogs bolted off terrified and would not return. People are said to experience the feeling of being watched and some claim to have been touched or pushed.

A male figure has been spotted and on one occasion disappeared around a fully lit doorway.

The figure has been given the name Oswald and is thought to have been one of the workers killed in the construction of the tunnels.

Mr Homer has carried out multiple investigations at the tunnels, and on one occasion caught what he believes was paranormal activity on camera.

He said: "That day we had got Drakelow Tunnels completely to ourselves. We were in tunnel one and had booked it for the day. We had to leave by 6pm so we decided to all get together towards the end of the investigation. We were all just sitting and talking when suddenly there was an enormous bang."

But the group were never able to get to the bottom of what caused the noise.



**By LUKE BARTLETT**

[@lbartlett\\_star](#)



### Bonded Warehouse

It was the night of Friday, November 4, in 2016 when Andrew Homer and a team of investigators took to the Bonded Warehouse in Stourbridge to try and capture something paranormal on camera.

The three storey canal side building, which has parts dating back to 1799, is reported to play host to a variety of strange activities.

Both staff and visitors of the Bonded Warehouse are said to have experienced objects moving, doors opening and closing by themselves and mysterious figures appearing.

Author Andrew Homer tells the Express & Star about what the investigation unearthed and how he managed to capture some of the supernatural goings-on with a small head camera.

Mr Homer said: "We had split into groups with one group downstairs and another upstairs spending about 45 minutes seeing if we could experience anything."

"The upstairs group had put a trigger object down – a chair in the middle of the room with a child's ball on it."

"Then my group went up ahead of me because I had to change the batteries on my head camera."

"I made my way upstairs and realised that the rest of the group were not there – I then went over to the very edge of the room to switch my head camera on."

"What you hear on the video that it captured is the ball bouncing and I was nowhere near the thing – the chair was right in the middle of the room."

"We did try after that positioning the ball again and seeing if it would fall off on its own but it didn't. It had originally been up there for at least an hour."

### Gibbet Lane

It was 5pm on December 18 in 1812 when gentleman farmer Benjamin Robins was brutally attacked.

The 57-year-old was making his way back to his home at Dunsley Hall following a successful day at Stourbridge market.

He had been drinking in one of the taverns in Stourbridge celebrating when 32-year-old William Howe, a working-class joiner, clocked eyes on him.

William was known for liking quality hats and quality clothes and fancied himself as a bit of a highwayman without a horse because he could not afford one.

He was looking for somebody to rob and unfortunately

Benjamin Robins was in the wrong tavern at the wrong time. After leaving Benjamin was making his way down Fir Tree Lane, known now as Gibbet Lane, when he noticed a person behind him catching up rapidly.

Robins was just half-a-mile away from Dunsley Hall when William caught up with him and pulled out and cocked a pistol.

William then shot Robins in the back and robbed him – leaving him for dead on the lane.

Robins had got just over 21 shillings on him which was quite a lot of money in 1812 and a fine silver pocket watch.

But defying the odds Robins managed to crawl his way to Dunsley Hall and was looked after by two doctors.

He lingered between life and death for 10 days and died on December 28 from his wounds.

This is said to have caused outrage in Stourbridge and Kinver. Gentleman farmers were scared by this and the fact that somebody could just be killed like this and robbed. Magistrates decided to call in two Bow Street Runners to investigate the case.

If they were called to an area to investigate then the magistrates would have to pay half of their upkeep whilst they were there.

Very often if they could bring a murderer to justice then there was extra money in terms of rewards.

There was a reward of £100 from Robins' own family and also £50 from Kinver residents and £50 from Stourbridge residents put up.

The Runners tracked down William Howe and arrested him. He was taken to Stafford jail but did not admit anything. Though in the end there were two pieces of evidence that condemned him.

Firstly he had pawned the silver pocket watch in Worcester and the pawnbroker remembered his face. Secondly he had got a pair of pistols, which were later discovered.

Whilst he was in jail he had got a fellow prisoner to pass a letter to his wife to tell her where the second pistol was hidden. It was hidden in a hay stack at Oldswinford.

The letter said to find it and get rid of it – though Howe had not been married very long and did not realise his wife could not read.

She had to give the letter to somebody else to read it and the game was up once this person read the letter and realised the content of it.

The trial did not last very long – just a few short hours.

He was sentenced to hang and he was said to have confessed to the murder of Benjamin Robins on the scaffold.

Having hung him, they then also gibbeted him. His body was put in a very strong iron cage and the cage was hung on a tree very high up on the lane where the attack took place.

Mr Homer said: "It was hard on the Robins family as

this character was hanging in a tree half-a-mile from their home on a path that they would have to have used.

"The idea was that he was gibbeted for a year and the body would rot away – what happened to William Howe after that year is not really known."

"It is believed that his bones were taken down and buried underneath the tree – and when he was buried under the tree they put a dagger through where his heart would have been. The idea was that the dagger is supposed to keep the spirit of the dead person in the ground."

"Clearly it didn't work because the spirit of William Howe very quickly made himself known."

"Even whilst he was gibbeted there is a story that two schoolchildren in 1813 came along to have a look and one of them shouted up to ask William how he was. He got an eerie response back of 'cold and clammy'."

"It is an eerie place, even in the summer on the nice day – there is something about it."

"People claim to have heard metal rattling around the area he was gibbeted, people claim to have experienced dark figures following them down the lane. Even today there are stories coming out of Gibbet Lane."

"We were up there one night and heard something that could have been chains rattling – we did get it recorded but it was quite quiet on the recording. It is clear something happened and it certainly has an atmosphere."

### The Talbot Hotel

It dates back to the 1630s and was formerly known as the home of rich and influential local ironmaster Richard Foley. As a coaching inn later down the line, The Talbot was a social and business centre in Stourbridge.

Today an extensive network of cellars beneath the building extend under the street and the adjacent shops. These tunnels are closely connected with the paranormal goings-on here and have been reported to take on a frightening and oppressive atmosphere at times.

During the 18th century a landlord of The Talbot Hotel had an affair with a younger lady who fell pregnant by him. The baby was stillborn and he hid the body behind one of the walls of the cellar in order to remove evidence of the affair.

Shortly afterwards the mother also died in room 19 and thereafter it was said to be haunted by a lady in white who wanders all over the building but particularly in the area around room 19.

She has been seen by staff and residents alike – a figure sobbing and searching for her lost baby.

● Andrew Homer's latest book *Black Country Ghosts and Hauntings* is available from Amazon



# JAWS roars into action

**JAWS**, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton  
FIRST up, Synthetic Recipe kept their mates happy with covers of songs by Fall Out Boy, Nirvana, Neck Deep and Green Day, but their closing song, an original entitled Methad In The Madness, suggests they have a future beyond covers.

You can catch them tomorrow night (Friday) at the Slade Rooms with Blick Black and the Chilliholers, Mayo and Override.

Tinned Astronaut went down a treat with an enthusiastic mosh pit thanks to their sudden gear changes and hard rock crescendos. New song Silver Tongue was an instant hit with the crowd but the biggest response was for Upsetty Spaghetti. George Smith is a confident frontman with probably Wolverhampton's best unsigned band.

Headliners JAWS come from Birmingham but this was a rare gig for them in Wolverhampton and singer/guitarist Connor Schofield was sporting a vintage Wolves top to mark the occasion. This outfit, formed at Halesowen College six years ago, after two albums stand shoulder to shoulder with more widely known bands like The 1975, Bombay Bicycle Club and Foals.

With their name literally up in lights behind them, JAWS oozed class with a funky rock sound festooned with chiming guitars. They opened with the dream pop of Surround You followed by recent single Cast from album Simplicity. They upped the pace for a high-energy finish with Just A Boy, Be Slowly and Gold, the song matching his shirt.



Shrek (Steffan Harri) wakes Princess Fiona (Laura Main) Photo: Helen Maybanks

## Ogre to Shrek's place for laugh-a-minute musical

**Shrek The Musical,**  
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

OGRE the top and monstrously funny, Shrek The Musical is laugh-a-minute family fun. The DreamWorks animated movie hit, which was transformed into a Broadway and West End show, is back on stage in Birmingham and provides the ideal half-term treat.

The children in the audience delighted in the slapstick comedy, colourful costumes and special effects, whilst the grown-ups could chuckle at a witty script packed with digs at fairy tale conventions, occasional innuendo and surreal dance routines.

The story revolves around grumpy ogre Shrek and his quest to rescue the Princess Fiona. In return height-challenged tyrant Lord Farquaad promises to allow back into his kingdom of Duloc an assortment of fairy tale characters that were forced to become squatters in Shrek's swamp after their eviction. Along the way the big green fellow reluctantly accepts a talking donkey as his travelling companion.

Musical theatre fans can tick off cheeky references to famous musicals, including Wicked, Chicago, The Lion King and Les Miserables. This touring production has a

### REVIEWS

by Leon Burakowski

cast that can really deliver the songs. Steffan Harri is in fine voice as our rotund hero. Laura Main is a fabulously feisty Princess Fiona, more than holding her own in a flatulence contest with Shrek – that scene is a big hit with the kids. Both are almost upstaged by Marcus Ayton as an ee-awesome Donkey, a singing dancing ass with sass.

Most laughs come from Samuel Holmes as the short-tempered Farquaad, scuttling across the stage and doing the most outrageous comic tricks with his little legs. The actor is not three and half feet tall so one can assume he has sore knees by the end of the performance.

With a theme about acceptance of diversity and Shrek's poignant line that beautiful doesn't have to mean pretty, this is a feel good show with its heart in the right place. It ends in party mood with the audience joining the cast in a rendition of I'm A Believer. If you liked the movie, you'll love this show. Shrek is at the Alex until Sunday, February 25.

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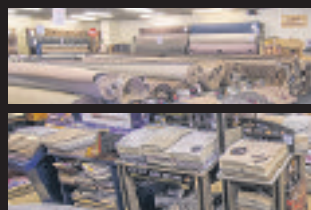
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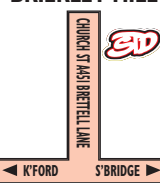
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Other terrestrial services that offer Freeview channels such as YouView, BT TV and TalkTalk will also be affected. Satellite and cable TV are not affected.

The changes are required by the UK Government to free up airwaves for future mobile broadband services.

For more information and to check if you're affected visit **www.freeview.co.uk/tvchanges** or call the Freeview Advice Line free on **0808 100 0288**.





# Yesterday's rubbish – tomorrow's antiques?

## ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



I HAVE talked about vintage bottles in this column before – but I thought this week we would re-visit the subject as we have an especially unusual one coming up for sale in our next auction!

Found buried in a south Shropshire river bank some years ago this William and Mary brandy bottle is in amazing condition for its age and is bound to catch the eye of collectors.

But much more humble examples also sell well and are currently to be found featured in the pages of popular design magazines

Bottles look good almost anywhere in the home, from the hallway and kitchen to a dining room or home office.

Old wine bottles make great single-stem vases and coloured ones look really attractive displayed in a group.

Perfume bottles are a collector's favourite and are much sought after not only for their particular age or make but also for their shapes – they look lovely in a bedroom or bathroom.

Generally speaking, look out for unusual shapes and colours, I've seen some very beautiful bottles that originated in other countries and probably contained liqueurs.

Champagne bottles make very nice candles holders – go for the labels this time, Bollinger and Veuve Clicquot – and old glass inkwells, although not strictly 'bottles', are idea displayed in a home office or used as pen holders.

Medicine bottles always attract attention from sale-room bidders, we sold a large collection last year, and again these look good in a bathroom.

Stoneware bottles dating from the Victorian and Edwardian era are perfect for a kitchen, look out for the branded ones, they are especially collectable.

Old bottles in good condition are fairly plentiful and this is largely because they would have been discarded in rubbish tips long before the days of recycling and therefore remained relatively undamaged – yesterday's refuse can be today's antiques.

Having said that, as with all vintage items check bottles carefully for any cracks or chips before you buy.

And of course, you could just buy an old bottle in which to send a message –

it might just reach its destination!

\* The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables will take place at the Mill Street sale-room, Low Town, Bridgnorth on Tuesday, April 3, from 10.30am.

Viewing is during the weekend and on the Monday prior to the sale and catalogues are available from the saleroom or online at [www.perryandphillips.co.uk](http://www.perryandphillips.co.uk). Newcomers to the auction should arrive in plenty of time to register and be allocated a bidding number and bids may be made (by prior arrangement) over the phone or left with the auctioneer.

\* Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.

\* A new promotional film about Perry and Phillips Auctioneers can be found on our website.

# School uniforms are rooted in our history



Uniforms help children look smart

LOVE them or hate them, most of us have worn a school uniform at some time in our lives.

My secondary school had grey woollen blazers trimmed in emerald green, grey pleated, knee length skirts and a pill box hat that went missing on my first day.

It is widely believed that wearing a uniform improves the way students learn and their behaviour at school, it also differentiates between students and any strangers that may be in the school grounds and helps to reduce victimisation linked to what someone is wearing or their social status.

Today there is consideration for gender free uniform and many schools include rules such as skirt length, shirts tucked in and sock colour.

There is no legislation that deals specifically with school uniforms, a school's uniform policy is generally the responsibility of the board of governors with guidance from education authorities.

Gov.uk states "Each school decides its uniform and must not discriminate based on gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or

## STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



belief. The head teacher can discipline your child for not wearing the school uniform. Your child can be suspended or expelled if they repeatedly ignore the uniform rules. Schools can also decide if girls can wear trousers, or if religious dress is allowed."

In the United Kingdom school uniforms date back to the 16th century, the first was thought to be Christ Hospital School in London in 1552.

Students at Eton, the private school in Berkshire, wore top hats and tail coats right up until 1972, they still have a strict uniform policy.

The school uniform market is worth hundreds of millions of pounds and recently the supermarkets have offered a wide choice of styles at low prices meaning primary school children can be kitted out more easily, reducing the financial implication to parents of

younger children, especially as there is usually a winter and summer clothing requirement. Most schools and academies are selling the items that sport the official embroidered badge in house.

Africa is the largest wearer of school uniform, it thrives due to it's students feeling a sense of belonging but most countries around the world adopt uniform in some form.

A Japanese elementary school has recently introduced a new uniform designed by Giorgio Armani and costing parents over £500.

Our children get a great sense of association and inclusion from wearing the same as their friends, being part of a team and getting used to the discipline and structure of rules and they look so smart too.

Lord Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scout movement said: "The uniform makes for brotherhood, since when universally adopted it covers up all differences of class and country."

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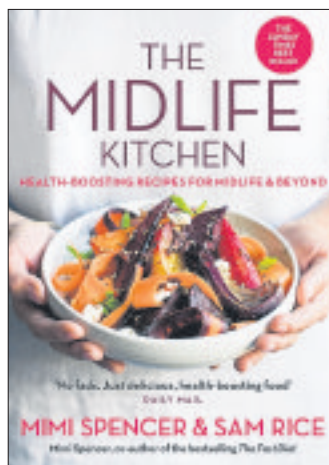


Ginger and pumpkin cheesecake from The Midlife Kitchen



Food writer friends Mimi Spencer and Sam Rice in the kitchen

# How to cook, eat and live well as the years tick by



The Midlife Kitchen by Mimi Spencer and Sam Rice is published by Mitchell Beazley, priced £16.99

THE key to really eating well, and not forcing yourself to eat sad salad after sad salad – particularly when you hit the mid-life stage – is to focus on taste and flavour above everything.

Well, this is what cookbook authors Mimi Spencer, 50, and Sam Rice, 48, believe: "Just because something is healthy, you don't have to eat it – we'd rather get our greens fix from a nice watercress soup than a wheatgrass shot."

The food writer friends first met at the school gates and are now celebrating the paperback version of their recipe collection, The Midlife Cookbook, which dishes up recipes big on taste as well as nutrition, targeted for those facing middle-age.

What made you tackle the middle chunk of life in cookbook form?

When you hit midlife, it is often a time for reflection on where you are and what you still want to do with your life. We both came to realise the limiting factor for most people as they get older is their health. If you look after yourself, you can still look forward to a good, long healthspan (we prefer this term to lifespan), which is the number of fit, functional years ahead. So where better to start than with food?

By Ella Walker

What should people be most aware of nutrition-wise during this period of their life?

As we age, there are two key things that happen relating to food: First, we need fewer calories overall as our metabolism slows, and secondly, we become less efficient at digesting the food we do eat. In practical terms, we need to eat nutrient-dense foods in order to get adequate nutrition from fewer calories. Foods that fit the bill include plenty of colourful fruit and veg, eggs, full-fat yogurt, lean (mainly non-meat) protein and nuts and seeds. The trick is to get these ingredients onto your fork in the tastiest way possible.

How can people best shake up their approach to cooking and food?

Shift food and cooking up the priority list a little. We all have to eat, and so instead of seeing it as a time-consuming inconvenience, it's more helpful to view it as an important investment in ourselves.

How have your own tastes and attitudes to food changed with age?

It might sound strange, but where we once craved a creamy pasta, we now prefer an interesting salad, not because we are 'trying to be good', but because our palates

have shifted and we are naturally drawn to more interesting flavours and textures. We've also found that investing a bit more time and thought in the food we prepare and eat has been a hugely positive thing, for our bodies, minds and social lives.

What do you feel when you cook?

For a long time, we were a bit resentful of the time we spent in the kitchen. When our kids were young, it was endless fish fingers and spag bol, so it really did seem like Groundhog Day. But now as midlifers, things have changed. Our kids are older, and we can cook more of what we want.

What most concerns you about fad diets and the so-called 'clean-eating brigade'?

What strikes us as bizarre with the recent wave of clean-eaters, is how what you eat is somehow linked to how good a human being you are. A lot of the language used is misleading and, in some cases, plain wrong. A green juice will not detox you, that is what your kidneys and liver are for.

Why, traditionally, do you think midlife has been relatively ignored?

Probably because the media has, for the longest time, been fixated with youth, Times have changed: Midlife is where the action is.



## Ofsted declare school is good

A SECONDARY school in Oldbury has been ranked as good by the schools watchdog in its latest inspection. Perryfields High School was previously rated as requiring improvement after an Ofsted visit in 2016.

But the school in Oldbury has now been upgraded to good overall – the second highest rating – after an inspection last month.

Inspectors said: “Leaders have been successful in developing an aspirational and ambitious culture at the school. The new headteacher is inspiring trust from the school community.”

Headteacher Ian Barton, who joined in September, said: “I would like to thank all the pupils, parents, staff and governors.”

# Concern at ambulance A&E delays

**AMBULANCE crews had to wait more than an hour to hand over patients to A&E at Russells Hall Hospital on more than 450 occasions in a month.**

The situation at the Dudley hospital in December had dramatically worsened.

In December last year, there were 458 instances when it took more than an hour for paramedics to drop off patients at the hospital. This compares with 151 in December 2016, and just three in December 2015.

The process of handing over a patient should take 15 minutes, according to the Government.

West Midlands Ambulance Service chief executive Anthony Marsh said the delays were putting the safe running of his organisation at risk.

### Stuck

It means paramedics can be stuck at a hospital while an emergency incident requiring them takes place.

Russells Hall was not the only hospital in the Black Country where the handover of patients was badly delayed. At Walsall Manor there were 110 incidents of handovers taking more than an hour in December, down from 160 the year before. There were 86 instances at New Cross Hospital and 14 at Sandwell General.

In a report to the ambulance service board, Mr Marsh said: “Patient handover delays at hospital is the single biggest factor that jeopardises the delivery of a safe ambulance service for people in the West Midlands.

“In total, the ambulance service lost 6,800 hours of ambulance resource due to handover delays that exceeded 30 minutes; this is the equivalent of 566 ambulance shifts or taking 18 ambulances each day off the road.

Karen Kelly, chief operating officer at the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We work closely with our colleagues at West Midlands Ambulance Service to make sure that patients who arrive by ambulance at A&E are assessed, treated and handed over as quickly

and efficiently as possible. Those requiring urgent clinical attention are always given priority. Our turnaround times have improved greatly since December.

“During December 2017, the volume of ambulances and the pattern of their arrival was at times very challenging. During these times of peak demand, ambulance crews did sometimes wait longer than we would expect.

“Once it is opened, the brand new emergency treatment centre will help reduce ambulance handover times as we are increasing our ambulance triage bays from four to 12.”

Dudley North MP Ian Austin blamed ‘chronic underfunding’ from the Government for Russells Hall being ‘overstretched’.

## Reanne pockets a home win



Snooker champion Reanne Evans with runner-up Nutharut Wongharuthai at Stourbridge

BLACK Country snooker ace Reanne Evans claimed her second title of the season as she won the British Open – and celebrated with a McDonald’s!

After winning the trophy on home ground she shared on Instagram a picture of herself and her daughter tucking into the fast food saying ‘celebrating in style ha.’

Dudley’s 11-time world champion sealed the championship with a 4-0 victory against Nutharut Wongharuthai, from Thailand, at the tournament staged at the Stourbridge Institute.

This was the fourth consecutive WLBS final for the 32-year-old.

Wongharuthai had seen off Netherton’s

## Dudley borough's music college put back by more than two years

A £31 million music institute planned for Brierley Hill will open three years later than originally scheduled, bosses have confirmed.

The ‘Resonance’ project at The Waterfront will not now welcome its first students until 2020.

The institute, to become the Black Country’s music college, was originally due to open in September 2017 but last week chiefs said its opening date has been pushed back amid funding issues.

### Loan

The college’s backers are still seeking funding for the project, expected to create at least 43 jobs, with council bosses asked to stump up a £200,000 ‘bridging loan’ by next January ‘should alternative funding currently being investigated not materialise’.

Dudley Council’s former regeneration boss Khurshid Ahmed said: “Any delay is

Maria Catalano, cousin of snooker champion Ronnie O’Sullivan to reach her maiden final.

Reanne said: “I’ve been struggling for form. But I felt a little bit more comfortable and I am happy with the win. It has been good to see everyone again this weekend and to be back competing at a tournament after a little gap in the season.

“I am now looking forward to the World Championship and hopefully going into the tournament with this win will put me in good stead.”

The Women’s World Championships in Malta are from March 14 to 7.

disappointing and we need to get this up and running soon. It will improve the local area and I hope everything that can be done is done to make sure this vital project is completed as soon as possible.”

David Barnard, co-director of Resonance, said: “There has been a very detailed due diligence process in terms of the funding but stars are beginning to align. We see Resonance launching in two phases. The first is the community phase and this will include staff recruitment activities in the community. The second phase will be the student intake and that is planned for 2020.”

A council report states that the loan would be required to be in place by January 2019.

The campus will include a lecture theatre, classrooms, practice rooms, library, recording studios, radio station and live music venue. Resonance is being developed by charity BICMP.

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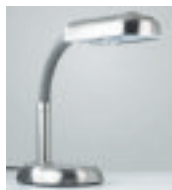
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King	D5754	£54.99	£32.99	D6096	£64.99	£36.99	D6100	£69.99	£39.99
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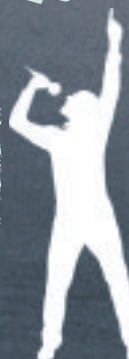
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# X Factor's Brenda is nicest star in town

She's not in the least snuffy about her X Factory past. Brenda Edwards is thrilled that her ITV success helped catapult her into the world of entertainment – so that she still gets great roles now, though it's a dozen years since her appearance on the second series of the show, back in 2005.

Brenda's life changed forever when she entered The X Factor in 2005. She was the last woman standing in the semi-finals and left the audience and judges spellbound week after week before signing up for a 27-date X Factor UK arena tour.

The ultimate acceptance by the public came when Brenda was presented with the Screen Nation Award in 2007 for Favourite Reality TV Star, which was a people's choice award.

In 2006, Brenda was snapped up to play Mama Morton in Chicago the Musical in the West End. She received such great acclaim for her portrayal of the prison warden that she was asked back to play the role again after appearing in the 10th anniversary gala performance.

In 2007, Brenda created the role of Pearl Pastor in Carmen Jones at the Royal Festival Hall, performing with both the London and Royal Philharmonic orchestras.

"It's been an interesting ride," she says, a master of understatement.

She's on the road now with Hairspray, calling in at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Monday to March 3.

"It's an amazing feeling to be part of the show. It's a great cast. It's nice to have fun and everybody is so supportive. That's what's needed when you're on the road and away from your family at home. It's nice that we all get on and we have fun."

The action in Hairspray is set in Baltimore in 1962 where Tracy Turnblad, a big girl with big hair and an even bigger heart, is on a mission to follow her dreams and dance her way onto national TV. Tracy's audition makes her a local star and soon she is using her new-found fame to fight for equality, bagging local heartthrob Link Larkin along the way. The show features the hit songs Welcome To The 60s, You Can't Stop The Beat, The Nicest Kids in Town and many more.

Brenda says: "It's an amazing feel-good show, but the things we're talking about are anything but feel-good. It was a time of racism and oppression but the musical doesn't shove that down your throat.

"There's an underlying message there which is serious and poignant, whether it's to do with sexism, ageism, religion or anything else. There is no other musical that covers so many topics.

"I've wanted to play this part for a long time. I auditioned for the West End, but I wasn't ready at the time because

Welcome to the 60s – Brenda Edwards in Hairspray



I was fresh from The X Factor. I wasn't successful then but it meant that I could go away and grow and come back with a real understanding of how to play the character. I hope I've achieved that.

"It's such a great role. She's very similar to me. I identify with her. The way she speaks her mind and she's a fighter and a strong lady. She has some amazing songs. I'm very lucky to be playing her."

She is respectful of the way The X Factor changed her career. It gave her a platform and she's used that to keep moving forward. "I didn't even know what I was looking to get out of it. I didn't think I'd win it or get as far as the live shows, to be honest. Having gone on the show and been

in that bubble – and that's what it is – it's easy to be confused once you come out because you are just shielded from the outside world.

"It's only when you come out and are on your own that you have to have this strong determination to put it behind you and decide where to go next. I just kept singing in clubs and doing lots of gigs.

"I was in it for 11 weeks until the semi finals.

I do believe I was one of the lucky ones. But you make your own luck and destiny. I wasn't put straight in for Chicago. I had to audition and I had five auditions for one role. It was very daunting. That was more frightening for me than my X Factor auditions."

Away from the stage, Brenda has faced battles of her own after being diagnosed with breast cancer. She made the brave decision to go public about that in the hope that her victory against the disease might inspire others.

*Sexism, ageism, religion – no other musical covers so many topics*

"I didn't hide the breast cancer away because I wanted to be somebody that could try to help somebody else out there. That's why I came out there. I was aware that people would see me as someone in the public eye. I wanted to raise awareness for the cancer. I went through it when I was on the Hairspray tour the last time. That's another reason why I wanted to come back this time. It was such a strong network of support for me.

"I felt my breast and it turned out it was that. I caught it early and had chemo and it's not nice, it's horrible, I have side effects but I'm alive. I am thankful every single day. That's what makes me want to do this show. You don't know when your time will be up. I want to spread the joy and happiness. I want to help others. I want to empower others."

Andy Richardson

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.



Stereophonics – tenth album



# Have a nice St David's Day with Stereophonics

ST DAVID'S Day will certainly have a Welsh flavour at Birmingham Genting Arena on Thursday (March 1) with Stereophonics in concert.

One of Britain's best live bands, the group formed in the South Wales village of Cwmaman 26 years ago and come to the venue totting their tenth studio album *Scream Above The Sounds*, follow up to 2015 chart-topper *Keep The Village Alive*.

Featuring singles *Caught By The Wind* and *All In One Night*, *Scream Above The Sounds* was primarily recorded at the band's west London HQ with the help of regular collaborator Jim Lowe. Frontman Kelly Jones says he aimed to write 'big anthemic songs', adding: "Every song offers a sense of release. Even

when there's nostalgia, fear or anxiety, they're still all offering hope and room to manoeuvre."

Stereophonics consist of founders Kelly Jones (vocals/guitar) and Richard Jones (bass) along with Adam Zindani (guitar) and Jamie Morrison (drums). Keyboardist Tony Kirkham joins the band for live shows. Birmingham-born Zindani, former lead singer and guitarist with Brum band Casino, has been with Stereophonics for 11 years now. Morrison, from Huntingdon, previously played with Noisettes.

Stereophonics have been touring the globe and were one of the most regular performers at the V Festival. Their most popular tracks in a career that stretches back to 1997 debut *Word Gets Around* include *Just Looking*, *Have A Nice Day*, *Madame Helga*, *Maybe Tomorrow*, *Dakota* and *C'est la Vie*.

# Family history inspires comedian



He's the comedian best known for football banter with Frank Skinner but David Baddiel's latest show is all about his family.

Baddiel's relationship with Black Country legend Frank was built around their love of *The Beautiful Game*. They were the poster boys of Euro '96, had a huge hit with *Three Lions* (with help from *The Lightning Seeds*) and attracted massive audiences to their witty Fantasy Football show.

Both had been successful comics beforehand. University of Cambridge educated Baddiel had

an earlier successful partnership with Rob Newman, the first comedians to sell out Wembley Arena, while Frank came from the school of hard knocks before teaching and then comedy, going from Midlands to national fame. They remain close friends.

David says: "We're an odd couple, Frank and I. I saw him yesterday, we communed about the death of Mark E Smith. He was such a big fan of *The Fall*. I knew he'd be upset so I went to see him, he lives in my road. We used to live together and when he moved out he bought a house two doors down. He's now bought a house 100

doors down.

It's a very expensive form of stalking."

My Family: Not the Sitcom is at Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre on February 28, Dudley Town Hall on April 19 and Stafford Gatehouse on May 19.

"I look at the fact that my mother, who was born in Nazi Germany, escaped from the regime by the skin of her teeth. The mad way she lived her life might have been rooted in that. Something about my mother speaks to me about a woman who knew she nearly didn't have a life and so lived it as a punch in the face to the Nazis."

# Low or high times with Morrissey

Gig of the week has to be Morrissey, pictured, at the Genting Arena on Tuesday, although the former Smiths frontman has become a divisive figure. Last year's *Low In High School* album got a mixed reaction. Other highlights include *The Blockheads* with Derek 'The Draw' Hussey at the mic for the late Ian Dury at Bilston's Robin 2 tomorrow (Friday). Liverpool's *All We Are* are back with the excellent *Sunny Hills* album and a gig at the Hare and Hounds, Kings Heath, next Thursday.



# Top comedy talent at Hippodrome gala

There's a funny couple of weeks ahead at Birmingham Hippodrome with lots of top comedians visiting. There is a charity night on Wednesday with Luisa Omelian's *Dead Funny* Birmingham's Big Comedy Gala. Luisa from *What Would Beyoncé Do?!*, Comic Relief, Live at the Apollo and Thigh Gap! presents the coolest comics on the circuit for a one night bonanza. Confirmed guests include Sara Pascoe, Mo Gilligan, Iain Stirling, Tom Allen, Suzi Ruffell, Ellie Taylor, Tez Ilyas, Jen Brister, Aaron Twitchen and Dan Nightingale. All proceeds go to Helena's Hospice Foundation supporting hospices in the Midlands and nationwide.

Other laughter makers with shows at the Hippodrome include Sean Lock on Tuesday and Dara O'Briain for three consecutive nights from Thursday, March 1.

Advertisement

# Mouth-watering dishes await all diners!

INDIAN restaurant Bangla Lounge has been a popular fixture on Halesowen's High Street for more than a decade, attracting a loyal clientele with a mouth-watering range of traditional favourites and in-house specials. Head chef Abdul Ahad, who has worked for manager Bari Azad and his family for more than 20 years, continues to bring creating his own delicious specialities.

Diners visiting on any evening between Sunday and Thursday can enjoy a two for one offer on main courses (eat in only, terms and conditions apply).

Served from 5pm, Bangla Lounge's Sunday buffet costs just £9.95 for adults and £5.95 for children under ten. More than 20 items are available and salads, desserts and coffee are included in the price.

If you are planning a celebration, the restaurant's upstairs function room, which can cater for up to



40 diners, is ideal for work parties, birthdays and anniversaries.

Takeaways are also available for a 20 per cent discount and free home delivery within a three mile radius. With Mother's Day fast approaching why not book here to treat your mom. To book, call 0121 585 7020 or visit [www.banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk](http://www.banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk)



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CHOICE



Ant & Dec

**Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway (ITV, 7pm)**  
New series. The entertainer duo return with their regular weekend variety show, featuring audience surprises, outlandish stunts and celebrity guests. Kylie Minogue gets proceedings under way by opening the show with a studio performance, and Olly Murs swaps his rotating chair on The Voice for a seat in the announcer's booth. Amanda Holden becomes the first famous face to fall victim to the pair's latest round of Undercover pranks, and Stephen Mulhern is back to preside over another Ant Versus Dec contest, this time featuring monster trucks. Plus, Scarlett Moffat returns to Takeaway for more extravagant challenges, and the boys launch the show's biggest-ever Place on the Plane giveaway.

BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **10.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage from day 15 in PyeongChang, South Korea. **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News. **1.15** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage from day 15 in PyeongChang, South Korea. **4.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v England (Kick-off 4.45pm). **7.00** **BBC News.** **7.10** **Regional Programme.** **7.15** **All Together Now.** More amateur and professional singers hope to impress "the 100" as they take to the stage in the singalong challenge, competing for the two remaining spots in the Grand Final. This time, one of the acts dares a cover of judge Geri Horner's biggest hit, It's Raining Men, while others opt for Ed Sheeran's Galway Girl, Wet Wet Wet's Goodnight Girl, and Ain't Nobody by Chaka Khan. Rob Beckett presides over the proceedings. **8.20** **Casualty.** Ethan becomes preoccupied with solving the ED's budget problems, compromising patient care in the process. Meanwhile, Glen makes a decidedly unromantic proposal to Robyn. **9.10** **Troy: Fall of a City.** Helen and Paris reach Troy, and discover news of their illicit elopement has arrived ahead of them. Rulers Priam and Hecuba engage in an agonising debate over whether to send Helen back to her husband, or face the consequences of defiance. Meanwhile, in Sparta, Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon marshal the Greek forces in preparation of an invasion of Troy. Notable in his absence is Odysseus, king of Ithaca, but is he really as ill as he claims to be? Historical epic, starring Louis Hunter. **10.10** **BBC News.** Weather. National Lottery Update. **10.30** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches. **11.55** **Live Winter Olympics 2018.** Radzi Chinyanganya presents coverage of the opening events on day 16 in PyeongChang, South Korea, which includes curling, bobsleigh, and ice hockey. **3.30** **Live Winter Olympics 2018.** Continued coverage from day 16 in PyeongChang, South Korea.

BBC2

**6.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day 15 from PyeongChang, South Korea. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Hairy Bikers Comfort Food. **12.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Continued coverage from day 15 in PyeongChang, South Korea. **1.15** Escape to the Country. **2.00** Italy's Invisible Cities. (R) **3.00** Nigel Slater's Middle East. (R) **4.00** Trust Me, I'm a Doctor. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** Tom Kerridge: Lose Weight for Good. (R) **6.00** **Hugh's Wild West.** Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall extensive wildlife tour continues as he visits Dorset, where the mild climate has provided all kinds of creatures with ideal habitat conditions. He meets retired policeman Mick Jenner, who has been filming an otter family for the past few years, and local bat enthusiast Colin Morris, who has been keeping a watchful eye on the rare Bechstein bat. Plus, at Portland Bird Observatory, Hugh joins ornithologist Martin Cade in monitoring migrating blackcaps and wheatears. **7.00** **Winter Olympics – Today at the Games.** Clare Balding presents highlights of the 15th day's action in PyeongChang, South Korea, which included snowboarding, alpine skiing, and four-man bobsleigh. **8.00** **David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities.** Footage of animals that have unusual means of finding their way around, including dung beetles that navigate by the sun and moon and pigeons with remarkable memories. **8.30** **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring seizes the chance to contribute to the war effort by guarding a captured German U-boat crew. Guest starring Philip Madoc. (R) **9.00** **Judi Dench: All the World's Her Stage.** Billy Connolly, Samantha Bond, Daniel Craig and Ian McKellen are among those reminiscing about the veteran actress in this celebration of her 60-year career. (R) **10.00** **Film: Philomena.** (2013) A disillusioned political journalist helps a woman find the child that was forcibly taken from her in the 1950s. Fact-based drama, with Judi Dench and Steve Coogan. **11.30** **Film: Strawberry Fields.** (2012) Drama, starring Anna Madeley. **12.55** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.00** BBC News.

ITV

**6.00** CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Bagel and Becky Show. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Do! (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.25** Dancing on Ice. (R) **1.20** ITV News. Weather. **1.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v Wales (Kick-off 2.15pm). **4.30** ITV News. Weather. **4.50** Regional Programme. Weather. **5.00** The Chase. (R) **6.00** **Take Me Out: 10th Anniversary Special.** A special edition of the matchmaking show, in which Paddy McGuinness switches the men and women around, with female celebrities seeking the approval of a panel of returning Romeos. **7.00** **Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway.** New series. The entertainers return with their weekend variety show, featuring a show-opening performance by Kylie Minogue. Plus, Amanda Holden falls victim to an Undercover prank. **8.30** **The Voice UK.** The contest heats up as the teams assembled by Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Jennifer Hudson and Olly Murs enter the Battle phase. Here, the coaches are tasked with chipping away at their roster of would-be stars via head-to-head studio battles. Each of the coaches are given 'steals', which gives them a chance to save any of the acts knocked out by their rival coaches during the sing-offs. As the contest gets ever fiercer, Emma Willis will be on hand to congratulate the victors, and commiserate with their defeated rivals. **9.50** **Through the Keyhole.** Keith Lemon challenges Jonathan Ross, Melanie Sykes and Ashley Banjo to guess which celebrity abodes he has invaded this week. Last in the series. **10.45** **ITV News.** Weather. **11.05** **Film: Lethal Weapon 4.** (1998) Action adventure, starring Mel Gibson and Danny Glover. **1.30** Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

**6.20** Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.45** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** The King of Queens. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.25** Coast vs Country. (R) **3.25** A Place in the Sun. (R) **4.30** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R) **5.35** The Supertv. (R) **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **Penelope Keith's Coastal Villages.** Penelope explores the seaside villages of Northumberland and the Scottish Borders. She finds out how architect Edwin Lutyens and garden designer Gertrude Jekyll designed a home on the exposed coastline of the island of Lindisfarne, and walks along the golden beach of Low Newton, before taking in the medieval village of Warkworth. Previously seen on More4. **8.00** **Britain at Low Tide.** Tori Herridge continues her mission to chart Britain's rich maritime history via state-of-the-art technology. This time, she visits Dorset, where she tells the story of the world's first aircraft carriers. The team also reveals the crucial role the Dorset coastline played in D-Day, and searches for a unique Iron Age monument that can only be seen – sometimes – for a few hours each year. **9.00** **Film: The Take.** (2016) Premiere. An American pickpocket in Paris accidentally steals some top secret information, and finds himself on the run from the CIA. The agent in charge of the investigation recruits the thief's help when he discovers a sinister conspiracy that threatens both of them. Action thriller, starring Idris Elba. **10.50** **Film: Dredd.** (2012) A law enforcer in a post-apocalyptic city must fight his way out of a tower block dominated by a ruthless crime lord. Sci-fi thriller, starring Karl Urban and Lena Headey. **12.35** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.25** The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.25** Coast vs Country. (R) **5.20** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake! **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **3.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **4.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.00** Rich House, Poor House. (R) **6.00** **The Wonderful World of Puppies.** The documentary series continues, highlighting how newborn pups' simple desire for sustenance from their mother evolves into a more complex set of emotions, covering everything from relationships with litter-mates to their bond with humans. Dexter the dalmatian cultivates a strong early attachment to his owner via massage sessions, while Loki the weimaraner discovers that – even though he may have been removed from his litter – a playful child can make for the perfect companion. (R) **7.00** **Cruising with Jane McDonald.** The singer sails the Danube on one of the most luxurious ships of its type, as she makes her first foray into the realms of the river cruise. (R) **8.00** **Britannia: Secrets of the Royal Yacht.** Part one of two. Rob Bell examines iconic ships that have played significant roles in Britain's maritime and cultural history, beginning with the Royal Yacht Britannia. (R) **8.55** **5 News Weekend.** **9.00** **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Fulham v Wolverhampton Wanderers and Sheffield Wednesday v Aston Villa. **10.00** **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Wigan Athletic v Rochdale and Charlton Athletic v Shrewsbury Town. **10.30** **Britain's Favourite Biscuit.** Celebrities including Sally Lindsay and Joe Swash discuss beloved biscuits, before the nation's favourite is revealed via a survey's results. (R) **11.55** **Cruising with Jane McDonald.** **12.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R)

DIGITAL

**BBC Four** **7.00** The Dark: Nature's Nighttime World **8.00** Winter Olympics Extra **9.00** Modus **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1985 **11.40** Annie Nightingale: Bird on the Wireless **12.40** Queens of Soul **1.40** Folk America on Later with Jools Holland **2.40** From Ice to Fire: The Incredible Science of Temperature **3.40** Close **ITV2** **11.30** Take Me Out **1.05** Mr Bean **2.05** You've Been Framed! Gold **3.10** Film: Babe (1995) **4.20** FYI Daily **4.25** Film: Babe (1995) **5.00** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **6.00** FYI Daily **6.05** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **7.05** Film: The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15** Film: The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) **9.50** Survival of the Fittest **10.50** Family Guy **11.50** American Dad! **12.45** The Cleveland Show **1.40** Ibiza Weekender **2.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **1.25** Film: Columbo: The Most Dangerous Match (1973) **3.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.00** The Durrells **7.05** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.05** The Good Karma Hospital **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV4** **11.25** Fishing Impossible **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Kempton. Coverage of today's race meetings at Kempton Park, Lingfield Park and Newcastle. **4.00** Film: The Train Robbers (1973) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05** Film: The Train Robbers (1973) **5.55** Storage Wars **6.25** World Cup Rivalries: England v Argentina **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. The second semi-final. **11.15** Film: High Plains Drifter (1973) **12.20** FYI Daily **12.25** Film: High Plains Drifter (1973) **1.30** The Professionals **2.25** Counting Cars **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **12.35** The Big Bang Theory **7.15** Film: Men in Black II (2002) **9.00** Film: The Heat (2013) **11.20** Gogglebox **12.25** Naked Attraction **1.30** Celebs Go Dating **4.20** How I Met Your Mother **5.05** Rude(ish) Tube **Film4** **11.00** Napoleon Dynamite (2004) **1.00** Ice Age: The Meltdown (2006) **2.45** Gulliver's Travels (2010) **4.25** The Family Stone (2005) **6.35** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00** Aliens: Special Edition (1986) **12.00** American Mary (2012) **2.05** The Bling Ring (2013) **3.55** Close

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## CHOICE



Tom Burke

**Strike – Career of Evil (BBC1, 9pm)**

Part one of a two-part adaptation of JK Rowling's detective novel, with Tom Burke returning for a third time as private eye Cormoran Strike. Robin receives a severed leg in the post, and Strike is soon on the trail of potential suspects - all of whom have personal vendettas against him. Matthew's jealousy threatens his relationship with Robin, especially when she and Strike go away overnight. Tom Burke, Holliday Grainger, Andrew Brooke, Ben Compton, Jessica Gunning, Matt King, Kerr Logan and Killian Scott star.

## BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Wanted Down Under. **2.00** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.45** Get Away for Winter. **3.30** Songs of Praise. **4.05** Earth's Natural Wonders. (R) **5.05** Earth's Natural Wonders. (R)

**6.05** BBC News.

**6.20** Regional Programme.

**6.30** **Countryfile.** Matt Baker and Helen Skelton present the show from Derbyshire, where they report on blood donation drop-ins for alpacas and a form of above ground potholing involving squeezing in and out of rocky tors. Tom Heap investigates illegal abattoirs and Adam Henson meets a North Wales farmer who uses a special kind of working dog to manage his livestock.

**7.30** **Hold the Sunset.** Edith turns 70, and Phil and Roger try to outshine each other with their gifts, while Roger also plots to ruin his mother's new romance. Guest starring Joanna Scanlan and Anne Reid.

**8.00** **Call the Midwife.** Barbara helps a pregnant mother-of-two whose husband has recently died, and is on hand to give her support when a further tragedy drives her and her children from their home. Lucille teaches a health and relationships class at the youth club, only to encounter a furious mother who objects to her daughter attending.

**9.00** **Strike – Career of Evil.** Part one of a two-part adaptation of JK Rowling's detective novel. Strike investigates potential suspects when Robin receives a severed leg in the post. Starring Tom Burke.

**10.00** BBC News.

**10.20** Regional Programme.

**10.30** **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman presents action from the only Premier League clash of the day, as Manchester United hosted Chelsea at Old Trafford.

**11.15** **Film: Point Break.** (1991) An undercover FBI agent infiltrates a Californian surfing gang to investigate a spate of armed robberies. Kathryn Bigelow's thriller, starring Keanu Reeves.

**1.10** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.15** BBC News.

## BBC2

**6.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day 16 from PyeongChang, South Korea. **11.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018 Closing Ceremony. Clare Balding presents coverage from PyeongChang, South Korea. **2.00** Live Athletics: Glasgow Indoor Grand Prix. Coverage of the meeting from Emirates Arena. **5.30** Flog It! (R)

**6.00** **Back in Time for Tea.** A family embarks on a time-travelling adventure to discover how a post-war revolution in food transformed the British way of life, sampling meals from 1918 to the present day. (R)

**7.00** **Winter Olympics – Today at the Games.** Clare Balding presents highlights of the 16th and final day's action in PyeongChang, South Korea, which included the deciding heats of the four-man bobsleigh, the gold-medal match in the women's curling competition, plus the men's gold medal ice hockey encounter, and also the ladies 30km mass start biathlon event.

**8.00** **Top Gear.** New series. Matt LeBlanc, Chris Harris and Rory Reid take a motorsports road trip across the Wild West. Back on the track, Rob Brydon is the Star in a Reasonably Fast Car.

**9.00** **Life And Death Row: The Mass Execution.** An attorney tries to halt an execution on the basis that the condemned man did not get a fair trial 24 years previously, but the original prosecutor is still determined to see the sentence is carried out. The family of a prisoner claim that DNA testing will prove his innocence, and the daughter of the woman he is accused of killing hopes his death will allow her to move on.

**10.15** **The Mash Report.** Nish Kumar and a cast of comedy correspondents present the satirical and surreal take on the week's news. (R)

**10.45** **Top Gear: Extra Gear.** New series. Rory Reid is joined by guests Sabine Schmitz and John Hennessey for a celebration of V8 engines, and takes a ride in a Mk 1 GT40 with Le Mans champion Jackie Walker.

**11.10** **Clevertan.**

**12.00** Women's Six Nations Highlights. **12.30** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.30** Holby City. (R) **2.30** This Is BBC Two.

## ITV

**6.00** CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.05** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Spy School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishful. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Love Your Garden. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** The Martin Lewis Money Show. (R) **11.30** The Voice UK. (R) **12.45** ITV News: Weather. **1.00** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. (R) **2.30** What Would Your Kid Do? (R) **3.30** Tipping Point. (R) **4.30** ITV News: Weather. **4.50** Regional Programme : Weather. **5.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)

**6.00** **Dancing on Ice.** Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby present fairytale week, as the remaining contestants perform fantastical routines to impress judges Christopher Dean, Jayne Torvill, Jason Gardiner and Ashley Banjo before the dreaded Skate-Off determines which couple will be leaving the show. Featuring a guest appearance from the cast of Disney on Ice.

**8.00** **Endeavour.** The detective drama prequel takes inspiration from an episode from Oxford's real-life history, in which Nation of Islam preacher and civil rights campaigner Malcolm X was invited to speak at the Oxford Union in December 1964, less than two months before his assassination in New York. Here, Morse struggles to negotiate escalating social tensions as a protest at a hair salon exposes rapidly escalating racial unrest in the heart of the city. Meanwhile, a murder at an Army base threatens to unveil long-held secrets within the regiment.

**10.00** ITV News: Weather.

**10.15** **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with Allegra Stratton. (R)

**11.15** **Six Nations Highlights.** Action from the third round of the championship, featuring France v Italy at the Orange Velodrome, Ireland v Wales at the Aviva Stadium and Scotland v England at Twickenham.

**12.10** 100 Year Old Driving School. (R) **12.35** Marcella. (R) **1.25** Jackpot247. **3.00** Take on the Twisters. (R)

## CHANNEL 4

**6.15** The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.30** Jamie's Quick & Easy Food. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.55** **Film:** Tooth Fairy. (2010) Family comedy, starring Dwayne Johnson. **5.00** **Film:** Ice Age: Continental Drift. (2012) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Ray Romano.

**6.35** **Channel 4 News.**

**7.00** **Posh Pawn.** James Constantinou is armed and dangerous in an army tank that a military vehicle enthusiast hopes to sell for £30,000 to fund the family trip of a lifetime, and brushes up on his history when he's presented with a Sultan's sword. Designer handbag expert Claudia Valentin meets a man-about-town who wants to upgrade his Hermes Birkin bag. (R)

**8.00** **Hannibal's Elephant Army: The New Evidence.** Scientists search for traces of the Carthaginian general's journey across the Alps with an army that included 40,000 men, 9000 cavalry and 37 elephants, a challenge that involved traversing mountains, raging rivers and the territory of hostile tribes. New evidence found in the rocky soil of the mountain range offers clues to the specific details of the trek. Palaeobiologist Dr Tori Herridge reveals why elephants are surprisingly good at mountain climbing, while historian Dr Eve MacDonald examines the motivations that drove Hannibal to make his seemingly impossible journey.

**9.00** **Homeland.** The espionage drama continues with Carrie's attempts to free the 200 members of the intelligence community imprisoned by the president after the attempt on her life. As Wellington protects Keane, O'Keefe continues to broadcast and Carrie makes a discovery. Claire Danes, Linus Roache and Elizabeth Marvel star.

**10.10** **Gogglebox.** (R)

**11.05** **Film: Shutter Island.** (2010) Mystery thriller, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Ruffalo.

**1.35** The World's Most Expensive Food. (R) **2.30** The Supervet. (R) **3.25** Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny. (R)

## CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.15** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.20** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.35** Mofy. (R) **6.40** Simon. (R) **6.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.50** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.05** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **7.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.10** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.25** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.10** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.05** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.00** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.35** **Film:** The Bridge at Remagen. (1969) **1.50** **Film:** A Bridge Too Far. (1977) Fact-based Second World War drama, with Dirk Bogarde. **5.05** **Film:** Where Eagles Dare. (1968) Second World War adventure, with Richard Burton and Clint Eastwood.

**8.00** **Carabao Cup Final: Highlights.** Arsenal v Manchester City. Colin Murray presents extended action from the showpiece match, as Arsene Wenger's Gunners met Pep Guardiola's men at Wembley Stadium. Arsenal had only ever won this competition twice, with their most recent victory coming 25 years ago. City had lifted the cup four times, most recently in 2016 following a penalty-shootout victory over Liverpool.

**8.55** **5 News Weekend.**

**9.00** **Film: Trainwreck.** (2015) Premiere. A journalist lives her life by her father's maxim that monogamy never works, and has spent her adult life enjoying freedom from commitment. When she is sent to interview a doctor, an attraction develops between them, and she begins to wonder if there might be something to be said for a stable relationship. Comedy, starring Amy Schumer, Bill Hader, Bill Larson and Tilda Swinton.

**10.00** **5 News Update.**

**10.05** **Film: Trainwreck.** (2015) Concluded.

**11.35** **Film: Sex Tape.** (2014) A couple try to spice up their marriage by filming themselves having sex, but then have to stop anyone from seeing the footage. Comedy, with Cameron Diaz and Jason Segel.

**1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Cowboy Builders. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Divine Designs. (R)

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four**

**7.00** Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble **9.30** **Film:** Clouds of Sils Maria (2014) **11.30** From Ice to Fire: The Incredible Science of Temperature **12.30** The Genius of Bert Jansch: Folk, Blues & Beyond **2.00** The Enigma of Nic Jones: Return of Britain's Lost Folk Hero **3.00** The Art of France **4.00** Close

**ITV2**

**12.30** Mr Bean **1.35** The Voice UK **3.00** **Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **4.05** FYI Daily **4.10** **Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **4.55** **Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** **Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **7.00** **Film:** Legally Blonde (2001) **8.00** FYI Daily **8.05** **Film:** Legally Blonde (2001) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Survival of the Fittest **11.00** Family Guy **12.25** American Dad! **1.25** Total Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

**ITV3**

**11.35** Lewis **1.35** A Touch of Frost **3.50** The Durrells **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** **Film:** Captain Corelli's Mandolin (2001) **12.35** Life of Crime **1.30** Blue Murder **2.45** George and Mildred **4.05** Road to Avonlea **5.50** ITV3 Nightscreen

**ITV4**

**11.35** Minder **12.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. The opening session of the final. **5.15** Storage Wars **5.45** The Chase: Celebrity Special **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. The second session of the final. **11.15** **Film:** A Dangerous Man (2010) **12.15** FYI Daily **1.20** Minder **2.20** Counting Cars **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

**E4**

**11.05** Rude (sh) Tube Shorts **11.20** The Goldbergs **12.20** **Film:** Stuart Little (1999) **2.00** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.00** Young Sheldon **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** **Film:** Men in Black 3 (2012) **9.00** Celebs Go Dating **10.00** Naked Attraction **11.10** The Big Bang Theory **12.05** Gogglebox **1.10** Celebs Go Dating **2.15** Tattoo Fixers **3.05** Rude Tube **3.35** Hollyoaks

**Film4**

**1.00** Cutthroat Island (1995) **3.35** Pride & Prejudice (2005) **6.10** Snow White & the Huntsman Interview Special **6.20** Snow White & the Huntsman (2012) **9.00** Alien 3 (1992) **11.15** Salt (2010) **1.15** Monsoon Wedding (2001) **3.35** Close



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FILM CHOICES

**MONDAY**  
**Elysium, Channel 5, 11pm**  
 In the future, most of the human race exists in poverty on a ruined Earth, while a wealthy elite live in luxury on an orbiting space station. A man dying of radiation poisoning fights security forces to gain access to the satellite and its medical facilities. Sci-fi thriller from the director of District 9, starring Matt Damon. (2013)

**TUESDAY**  
**Killer Collector, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
 Two women at an auction unwittingly purchase a storage locker belonging to a serial killer that contains evidence of his crimes. They soon find themselves in a desperate race to uncover the truth before the murderer tracks them down. Thriller, directed by and starring Casper Van Dien. (2015)

**WEDNESDAY**  
**Good, BBC1, 11.45pm**  
 A literary professor in 1930s Germany finds his work praised by the fast-rising Nazi party, and begins to enjoy the privileges conferred by their acclaim. As his prosperity grows, he becomes increasingly morally compromised, and as the true nature of Nazi ideology becomes clear, he tries to protect his Jewish psychiatrist from the state. Drama, with Viggo Mortensen, Jason Isaacs and Jodie Whittaker. (2008)



Elysium, Monday, Channel 5, 11pm

**THURSDAY**  
**My Family's Secret, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
 A man attempts suicide, leaving a cryptic note claiming he may have caused his sister's death. His wife goes back to his home town in search of answers and asks his brother for help. She does not realise her brother-in-law has a split personality, and digging up the past brings out his more dangerous aspects. Thriller, starring Nicholle Tom. (2010)

**FRIDAY**  
**Blades of Glory, BBC1, 11.05pm**  
 A bad-boy figure skater and his effeminate arch-enemy are banned from the sport after their intense rivalry results in a brawl. However, the pair find a loophole in the regulations allowing them to enter the world championships as the first ever same-sex pair. Comedy, starring Will Ferrell. (2007)

# Mary serves up more tasty treats in her new series

**Y**ou just can't keep a good woman down.

Mary Berry may be 82, an age when most people are concentrating on relaxing rather than reaching the peak of their career, but she's bigger and more popular than ever. And it's all down to one little programme - The Great British Bake Off.

She was already well known before it came along, but the show turned her into a household name. Of course, she's no longer associated with it, having decided not to stay with the series, as her fellow judge Paul Hollywood did, when it moved to Channel 4.

Her place was taken by Prue Leith, who has proved a worthy successor. She also has a cheeky side that allows Hollywood to be less serious than in previous runs - does that mean Berry prefers people to mind their Ps and Qs when she's around?

Perhaps so, but seeing as she's going solo these days, it no longer matters. No doubt she will continue to bring her homespun magic to us for some time to come; certainly the BBC hope she will.

"Mary is an extraordinary woman, loved and adored by the British public, and the BBC is her natural home," says the broadcaster's director of content, Charlotte Moore.

"I've been very lucky to have had the pleasure of working with Mary for many years and I'm so pleased that relationship will continue. She is an inspiration to generations, a real icon and I can't wait to cook up more unmissable shows with her in the future."

Berry is still keen on bringing her wisdom to as many people as possible - and it seems that, if she is attracted to a project, she will grab it with both hands. It's an approach she credits to a three-month spell she had in hospital after contracting polio as a child; she claims that being away from her family inspired her to make the most of every opportunity.

Berry turns 83 in March, an age when many people are slowing down and enjoying their retirement. Instead, she's heading back into the kitchen to reveal the best way to prepare some of her favourite meals.

"These are my wonderful brand-new recipes - timeless classics, simple British dishes and delicious, modern favourites to tempt family and friends," she explains. "With my trusted tips and techniques for quick, easy and foolproof cooking, in Classic I'll show you how to make the very best food in my own special, no-fuss way."

And unlike some TV chefs, she doesn't like to bombard viewers with ingredients they may never have heard of: "It's very important that the recipes work and contain ingredients that everybody can buy from supermarkets."

Amen to that!

On the menu during the run will be rack of lamb with orange and thyme sauce, a perfect loin of pork with apple sauce, lemon meringue pie and many, many more mouth-watering meals and treats.



Classic Mary Berry, Monday, BBC1, 8.30pm

# BEST OF THE REST

**MONDAY**  
**Electric Dreams: The Father Thing Channel 4, 10pm**  
 Eleven-year-old Charlie Cotrell must make the most difficult decisions imaginable to protect his mother and the human race when he is among the first to realise that the homes of everyone on Earth are being infiltrated by an insidious extra-terrestrial threat. The return after a break of the sci-fi anthology featuring stories based on the works of Philip K Dick, with this instalment based on 1954 short story The Father-Thing and starring Greg Kinnear, Mireille Enos and Shannon Brown.

**TUESDAY**  
**Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh Channel 5, 8pm**  
 With its awesome frontage ('more glass than wall') and six turrets, Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire was a wonder of its time. The magnificent 16th-century mansion is Alan's first destination in series two of the programme looking at some of Britain's historical homes and gardens. He hears how Hardwick was the fabulous home of Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, commonly referred to as Bess of Hardwick, who rose to become the second most powerful woman in Tudor England,

after Queen Elizabeth I. Meanwhile, Miriam O'Reilly visits nearby Stainsby Mill, which produced flour and bread for the residents, guests and staff of the estate and, also in the Peak District, Jenni Bond travels to Ecton Mines, a rich source of copper bought by Bess's descendants. Finally, Peter Purves visits Oxburgh Hall, a moated manor house in Norfolk which boasts needlework created by Bess and Mary, Queen of Scots.

**WEDNESDAY**  
**The World's Most Extraordinary Homes BBC2, 8pm**  
 New series. Award-winning architect Piers Taylor and actress and property enthusiast Caroline Quentin return to explore more extraordinary homes around the world. In the opening episode, the pair travel to Portugal, where they come across four very different properties. First, they visit a ultramodern house located in the Portuguese Riviera, before travelling to Penela, to view a property owned by British ex-pats Neil and Shirley. The pair then visit a house built within a pine forest near the Atlantic coast,

before ending their journey around Portugal at a property hidden in the mountainous region of Peneda-Geres National Park.

**THURSDAY**  
**Serial Killer with Piers Morgan ITV, 9pm**  
 Piers Morgan has interviewed several convicted killers for his US-based documentaries, including Mark Riebe last year. His latest unsettling encounter is with Lorenzo Gilyard, who is also known as the Kansas City Strangler. For nearly two decades, beginning in 1977, he brought fear to the streets of Kansas City, Missouri, raping and murdering vulnerable women before discarding their bodies. It wasn't until 2003 that DNA evidence linked the victims to Gilyard, a seemingly happily married man who was respected at his job as a sanitation worker. He was tried for seven murders and found guilty



Serial Killer with Piers Morgan, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

of six of them, and is now serving consecutive life sentences with no chance of parole. He continues to protest his innocence and at first seems to have an answer for all of Morgan's question, but eventually he starts to run out of excuses.

**FRIDAY**  
**Live Athletics BBC2, 5.50pm**  
 The World Indoor Championships. Coverage of the evening session on the second day of the competition, which takes place at Arena Birmingham. The women's 60m will come to a conclusion tonight with the running of both the semi-finals and final, and there will also be finals staged in the men's long jump and women's shot put, while the women's pentathlon will conclude with the long jump and 800m. Other notable events on the timetable are the opening round of the men's 800m and women's 1500m, in addition to the semi-finals of the women's and men's 400m.

**The Yorkshire Steam Railway: All Aboard Channel 5, 8pm**  
 New series. Life on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, following an eventful week during which plans are made to welcome star steam engine Royal Scot to the heritage railway.

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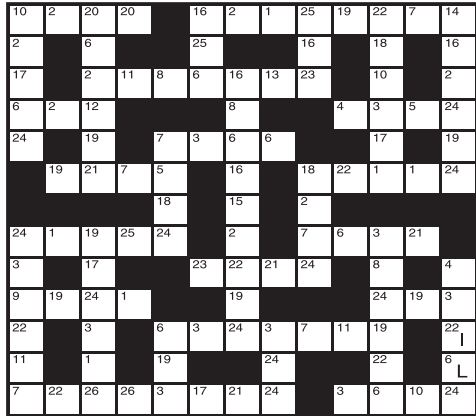


## BRAIN GYM

No.468

## Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	M	Y	D	I	C	J	G	A	T	H	P	Z	V
14	O	Q	X	U	F	W	K	E	L	B	S	N	R

## Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

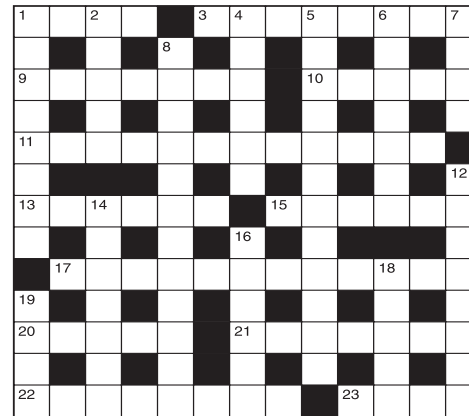
## Cryptic Clues:

## Across

1. Fail to get a spinster (4)
3. The cards I can beat are a disadvantage (8)
9. Tells of bishops losing prominent leader (7)
10. The colour of whitebeam berries (5)
11. Although inexperienced with digits, they're useful in the nursery (5,7)
13. Letter offering plenty of lip (6)
15. Figurine of astute construction (6)
17. Girl all at sea for the first time? (6,6)
20. Put ring on arm or leg to show condition of neglect (5)
21. Uneasy with the others I have (7)
22. Offered to look after Eastern Communist (8)
23. Forsook political wing (4)

## Down

1. Spoil one gilt flower (8)
2. Loves to find the answer (5)
4. Attack because to put to sea (6)
5. Dose given to animal to make it a puller of heavy loads (7,5)
6. A bar, etc. for entertainment (7)
7. Left harbour (4)
8. Shrub trained in tree form went up in quality (8,4)
12. Tear about always showing great respect (8)
14. Atom ban affected water transport operator (7)
16. Half-open plant supplies part of meal (6)
18. A team apart (5)
19. Uninteresting place to live (4)



## Quick Clues:

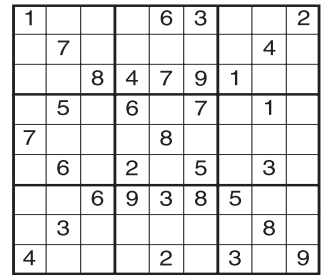
## Across

1. Jealousy (4)
3. Rubbing (8)
9. Like fungus (7)
10. Disturb (5)
11. Tangle (12)
13. Ascends (6)
15. Squirm (6)
17. Esteem (12)
20. Concerning (5)
21. Unravel (7)
22. Constantly (8)
23. Colours (4)

## Down

1. Effectiveness (8)
2. Poison (5)
4. Lessen (6)
5. Opposite numbers (12)
6. Briefly (2,5)
7. Observation (4)
8. Worked together (12)
12. Enthusiasm (8)
14. Ameliorate (7)
16. Existing (6)
18. Very coldly (5)
19. Overtake (4)

## Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS &gt;

7	9	2	4	8	3	6	1	5
5	4	8	2	1	6	3	9	7
6	3	1	9	7	5	8	2	4
1	8	3	7	9	2	5	4	6
9	5	6	3	4	8	1	7	2
4	2	7	5	6	1	9	8	3
3	7	5	1	2	9	4	6	8
2	6	9	8	3	4	7	5	1
8	1	4	6	5	7	2	3	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:  
CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Niblick; 7 Spent; 9 Actor; 10 Resided; 12 Stand to gain; 14 Legal action; 18 Besiege; 19 Adore; 21 Paint; 22 Setting.  
Down: 1 Cinch; 2 Almost; 3 Act; 4 Spring; 5 Inherit; 8 Testate; 11 Enlarge; 13 Several; 15 Aligns; 16 Oddity; 17 Crone; 20 Set. QUICK - Across: 6 Forlorn; 7 Vixen; 9 Prime; 10 Counsel; 12 Expostulate; 14 Extravagant; 18 Flowing; 19 Spate; 21 Fiery; 22 Deficit. Down: 1 Lorry; 2 Climax; 3 Orb; 4 Signal; 5 Memento; 8 Cottage; 11 Convene; 13 Explain; 15 Reward; 16 Napkin; 17 Attic; 20 Few.

## Quiz

1. Who was born Maria Eva Duarte?
2. Of which bird is the European redwing a variety?
3. Tornado Alley lies between which two US mountain ranges?
4. How many cards are there in a tarot deck?
5. In which US state are the towns Norman and Enid?
6. Which London attraction has its own police force?
7. In which mythology was Marduk the creator of Earth and humans?
8. Which sea bird is also called the solar goose?
9. What is the study of crops and soils called?
10. In which country was Alcoholics Anonymous set up in 1934?

## Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Lobster; 2 Franz Liszt; 3 Kookaburra;  
4 Alva; 5 Peter Sellers; 6 Pontefract;  
7 Seaweed; 8 A lizard; 9 Table tennis; 10 Walter Mitty.

Niner: DRUMSTICK

## Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

3213476  
578571  
986219

gives a fabric,  
gives a cloth,  
gives a fur.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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# Early days but worth a second look

IT'S always exciting to try out a new restaurant for the first time and even better when it's a cosy dinner for two.

On a visit to M&S in Stafford I spotted Zizzi was opening opposite the store in the new Riverside complex.

I was eager to visit as many moons ago they had an amazing dish on the menu, Pasta Genovese with green beans and pesto (if I remember correctly).

The opening date was shrouded in mystery and I watched patiently as the dining space gradually took shape behind the huge glass windows.

It opened a couple of weeks before Christmas (good marketing) on a day where thick snow blanketed the land. We'd booked a table for that very evening. It was quite busy considering the conditions.

## OVERLOOKING

We were welcomed warmly and shown to a table upstairs which was more of a mezzanine level overlooking the dining area downstairs. It was toasty warm and there was a convivial buzz in the air. The furnishings were tasteful and retroesque in their styling. It was an intimate table meaning we could gaze into each other's eyes without putting off the other diners. The taste of Italy also holds a special place in our hearts as it was the scene of a rather romantic proposal.

The menu was vast with plenty of nibbles, starters and mains to choose from including pasta, pizza, risotto, along with baked dishes too. I scoured the dishes but alas, Pasta Genovese was a thing of the past. I was keen to try something new and to have a more interesting starter than just garlic bread. It's a staple in our household with most meals.

I decided on the arancini – risotto balls with mozzarella, peas and a breadcrumb coating served

Room with a view – inside is bright, light and airy



Shroom for more – the porcini giganti tortelloni



with a red pepper tapenade dip – and bullied him into ordering the 'little soul' bread, doughy puffs baked with garlic and smoked sea salt they come with two hummus-style dips.

A bottle of red wine was also on the agenda. We went for the Nero D'Avola, Sicilia, a bargain for restaurant wine at £14.95 and it tasted pretty smooth. The waitress was bubbly, polite and helpful and while it was clear that the staff were still finding their feet, everything seemed to be running like clockwork.

The starters arrived in just the right amount of time and we decided to share them so we could sample both. The little soul bread was lovely, light and fluffy with a gorgeous golden crispy crust. The arancini balls were a little bit disappointing for me at least. He liked them.

One of the reasons I'd picked them was the mention

of peas but I couldn't really taste any so that was a bit of a blow. The tapenade was full-bodied, sweet and very tasty, perfect with the salty cheese flavour.

The mains were on their way and once dishes were cleared and wine topped up and chatter resumed they arrived piping hot and decent sized portions too.

He'd gone for an Italian classic lasagne and I'd decided on something different, the porcini giganti – giant tortelloni pockets filled with ricotta and porcini mushrooms in a creamy wild mushroom sauce with baby spinach, crispy sage and riserva cheese.

He was delighted as the lasagne was creamy, tomatoey with an explosion of herbs and seasoned meat in every mouthful. But once again I had ordered badly on this evening.

The pasta was a bit too heavy going. The filling a little

dry as if it had been overcooked. It was very mushy which overpowered any flavour of spinach or ricotta which was a shame as they were my favourite elements.

We'd also gone for a side of herby potatoes which were gorgeous a nice amount of oil and herbs and perfectly-cooked fluffy spud.

We didn't order dessert, no room, although there were some tempting choices, and requested the bill.

Unfortunately we were left sat with our plates until the end which wasn't great but as it was opening night these are things we could overlook. Perhaps the chef was still learning the dishes and the waitresses learning the ropes. But the ambience and service more than made up for this. We walked off our meal with trek home through the snow and I'm hoping for second time luckier for my meal!

LISA WILLIAMS

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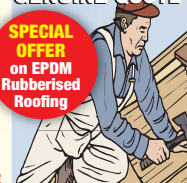
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01384 468831 / 07985 575865  
www.eliteplasticsupvc.co.uk

## Skip Hire

### MT SKIPS & GRAB HIRE

**Save £££**

All size skips and all areas covered  
Same day delivery faster than  
A phone call!!!

Open 7 days a week

07920 88 57 74 or 01384 24 09 56



## Mot's

**MOT**  
**£27.99**  
with this advert  
**FREE RE-TEST**

Green Garage, Unit 2a Station Road,  
(rear of Gold Cue Snooker Club), Blackheath, B65 0LJ

**0121 559 6001**



## Tiling

### I.C.A. TILING SERVICES

Walls, floors, bathrooms, kitchens and conservatories.

Ceramic, porcelain, mosaics, slate, marble and all natural stone.

**FULL BATHROOM INSTALLATION AVAILABLE**

Quality workmanship at competitive prices.

Fully insured. Portfolio available.

For a free quote call Ian on  
01384 412796 or 07890 894631



## Tree Surgeon

### TREE SURGEONS

11 YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN ALL ASPECTS OF TREE MAINTENANCE & TREE FELLING, STUMP REMOVAL, HEDGE TRIMMING

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0121 550 1075



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www.terrafirma-arb.co.uk

## Plumbing

### HOUSEHOLD PLUMBING

(General Plumbing and Bathrooms)  
**All installations and repairs**  
Supply and fit or fit only  
**EST 1994**  
TIDY, MODERN APPROACH. REGISTERED PLUMBER  
No job too small. Friendly service. Free advice and quotes  
Tel: Neil 07968 786449 - 0121-602 6776  
www.household-plumbing.co.uk

### Local Specialists



Our Specialist Section offers you a wide range of local businesses and tradesman to deal with your needs and requirements.

Most ads are legal, decent, honest and truthful.

In 2016, the ASA removed 4,824 that weren't.

To advertise your business and reach more than 41,000 potential customers...

**1**

Call us on...  
01902 319590

**2**

E-mail us at...  
mark.moore@expressandstar.co.uk

**3**

Post to...  
Mark Moore, Halesowen Chronicle, Black Lake Regional Centre, West Bromwich B70 0QB



## Index

- 1 Family
- 2 Leisure Time
- 3 Home & Services
- 4 Pets & Animals
- 5 Business & Farming
- 6 Property
- 7 Jobs
- 8 Motoring
- 9 Local Information
- 10 Personals

## Free Ads

**IT'S FREE IT'S EASY**

For items up to **£250**  
**VISIT:**

[bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk](http://bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk)

Simply press the free ad icon.  
Sorry, no pets, guns or livestock.  
Private advertisers only.

## Place a paid for advert

**By Phone 01902 317878**  
8.30am - 5.30pm Mon - Fri.  
Closed Sat/Sun and Bank Holidays

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At your local Express & Star Office.  
Cancel/amend, call before 3.00pm  
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Friday for Monday's advertisement.

### Funeral Directors

**N.E. DOWNING**  
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Independent  
family run  
Funeral Directors

24 hour service  
Halesowen  
0121 422 2794

[www.nedowning.co.uk](http://www.nedowning.co.uk)

### Lost & Found

#### LOST BLACK CAT

**EMMETT**  
6 years old, microchipped and neutered, no collar, recent shaved patch on neck, from Hilston Avenue, Penn since February 9, 2018. Reward for safe return or information.  
Omie 07920 524855.

## 1

### Family

#### Elderly & Disabled

**LA-Z-BOY LUXURY** lift power recliner, cost £1,430, 12 months old, luxury leather, 10 year warranty, £500. 07835 405842.

**MOBILITY SCOOTER**  
Four wheeled scooter that will easily fit in a car boot. Very good condition. Ready to use. Delivery possible.  
£265.  
07905 770683.

**QUINGO VITTESS MOBILITY SCOOTER**  
5 wheel, 8mph, 30 mile radius, all receipts and paperwork included, cost £5,000.  
Sell for £2,000 o.n.o.  
01384 591786/07955 769027.

**WREKIN STAIRLIFTS** reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

## 2

### Leisure Time

#### Camping Equipment

**TRAILER TENT WANTED.** I am looking for trailer tent, folding camper, or folding or pop top caravan. Cash waiting.  
07870 268835.

### Caravans Wanted

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* All Caravans Wanted \*  
\* Any Age or Condition \*  
\* CASH \* WAITING \*  
\* Immediate collection \*  
\* Call Bill on 07825 325 913 \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

#### Self Catering Holidays

**BURNHAM-ON-SEA**  
Self Catering Holiday Apartments  
Disabled Facilities  
Pet Friendly  
**01278 794111**  
[www.GoSomerset.co.uk](http://www.GoSomerset.co.uk)

### Travel Abroad

**READERS ARE REMINDED**  
to check with any Advertiser that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

#### Caravans/ Motorhomes



**HIGHLEY PARK HOME**

12 month residential site, park home lodge, not far from Bridgnorth, fabulous views, own garden and drive way, near bus stop.  
£82,000

07774 715830.

**LUNAR CLUBMAN 2002** 530/4 4 Berth with motor mover winter cover and awning end dressing room side dinette, £3,995.  
07717 090817.

**WANTED** Camper Van / Motorhome by private cash buyer. All models considered. Please ring 07774 898966 or 01902 747180.

#### Jumble Sales / Fetes

**BRIC-A-BRAC FAIR**  
Sunday, 25th February  
Next Sale: March 11th  
**KINVER COMMUNITY CENTRE, DY7 6ER**  
10.30am - 4pm  
Tel: 01384 894464

### Sports & Leisure

**Free Ads**

**IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY**  
For items up to £250.  
Online at  
bookanad.  
[expressandstar.co.uk](http://expressandstar.co.uk)

## 3

### Home & Services

#### Carpets/ Furnishings

**CARPET** 16ft 6 inches x 13ft 2 inches, heavy duty, stain guarded, all unused, cost over £270, accept £35. 07760 660814.

#### Furniture

**BROWN LEATHER THREE PIECE SUITE**  
Never been used.  
Cost over £1,000  
Sell £370.  
07340 739899.  
Can deliver.

**CANE CONSERVATORY** suite, two seater, two chairs, plus foot stool. £250. Must collect. 01902 846917.

**TWO SEATER SETTEE**  
Plus three seater, brown leather, £260.  
Italian settee, 3 seater and two chairs, £220.  
Both good condition.  
01384 383150 or  
07972 739653.

#### In Your Garden

**LAWN TRACTOR 22 HP, 42" CUT**  
With collector.  
As new. Unused.  
Cost £4,000 will accept £1,995.  
Can deliver.  
07710 169150.

#### Items For Sale

**ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED**  
That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

**CORRUGATED GALVANISED**  
Sheets. New, £8 can deliver. Also box profile and PVC/polycarb. David Broxton on 07834 489558.

**FULLY FURNISHED DOLLS HOUSE FOR SALE**  
07510 167182.

**POTTERS WHEEL** professional. Mains electric, £100.  
01902 441140.

**HAVE YOU CHECKED** your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

#### Items Wanted

##### A BEST CASH PRICE

**FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS**  
Any gauge or age  
Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.  
01384 836219/07891 713547  
thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com



**A BEST CASH PRICE PAID FOR DIE CAST CARS / LORRIES**  
Britains, Corgi, Dinky, Spot on, Tri-ang, Danbury Mint and Mamod Engines.  
Best prices paid.  
Any condition.  
Collections bought.  
Telephone 01922 327897 or 07976 691563.

**ALL BRASS / COPPER** ornaments/brassware, all descriptions, miners lamps, old medals, dinky, corgi toys and railways. 01902 745598.

**WANTED**  
ALL MILITARIA ITEMS FROM WARS WANTED BY COLLECTOR

Swords, medals, helmets etc, single or full items.  
German, Japanese, British.  
Will collect.  
Very good prices paid  
07511 500337.

**MAMOD STEAM** engines/trains wanted all conditions, railway collections, Scalextric by Tri-ang, any condition. 01902 745598.

**READERS ARE ADVISED** to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

**SPECTRUM GAMES** Wanted, plus any Spectrum 128k+2 computer wanted also any old Crash or your Sinclair Magazines. 01902 892918.

#### Loans

**READERS ARE REMINDED** that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

#### Photography & Camcorders

**PHOTOGRAPHIC ENLARGERS** Durst 605 and MPP. £25 each. 01902 441140.

### specialists at your service

#### Aerials

**AA DIGITAL AERIALS**  
AERIALS FITTED FROM £79.99  
01902 858191 • 01384 429166  
01543 433095 • 01922 716029  
A AERIAL AND SKY SPECIALIST  
Digital aerials, CCTV cameras, TV wall mount fitted. 07850 330251.

## CLASSIFIEDS FOR YOU!



"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call  
**01902 319 191**

**Classified Ads**  
Brought to you by Express & Star

#### Alarms/Security

### PREMIER ALARMS

Supplied and Fitted £249  
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12 Months Warranty  
All areas covered  
All quotes beaten!  
**Call: 0121 601 9791**

#### Bathrooms

**CHANGING ROOMS**  
IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING YOUR HOME  
enquiries@changingrooms.org.uk  
Is bathing becoming difficult?  
Let us make life easier  
Easy Access/ Wet Room Specialists  
Showroom at 47A Kent Street, Dudley  
01902 670426

#### Fencing

## CLASSIFIEDS FOR YOU!



"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representatives and would recommend them to anyone! They have done a very professional job with my website so I get online enquiries as well now."

**Michael-Portway Fencing**  
For great business results call  
**01902 319 191**

**Classified Ads**  
Brought to you by Express & Star

**C B SHEDS & FENCING**  
We supply & fit. Free quotes.  
Call: 01922 720270  
We also supply sleepers and decking

**PORTWAY FENCING**  
SPECIAL OFFER  
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards.  
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.  
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656  
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm  
Sat 9am - 12noon  
83 Portway Rd, W'bury  
DELIVERY AVAILABLE  
[www.portwayfencing.co.uk](http://www.portwayfencing.co.uk)

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Trees pruned, felled, topped.  
Hedges/ shrubs lowered, trimmed, shaped tidied- removed, clearances.  
Free Quotes.  
**01902 212165, 07564 603695**

**GARDENS TIDIED** from £5 per garden, 25 years experience. Call 01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

#### Gas Fitting

**READERS ARE ADVISED** To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered. It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

#### Handyman Services

**LOCAL HANDYMAN** Most Trades, Free Quotes, Insured, CRB, C&G, All Areas. Contact Lee 0121 585 8263 or 0789 147 5718

#### House Clearances

**A ABSOLUTE BEST** cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. 07852 172641 / 07710 360327 / 01902 534021

#### Plastering

**STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE** Clean and Reliable. All Work Undertaken All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

#### Plumbing & Heating

**TWO FLAVEL REGENT RADIANT** convactor gas fires, £40 each. Telephone 01902 661649.

#### Removals

**CALL DEAN NOW:** For all your Removal needs, 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

**KT HOUSE REMOVALS**  
12 years experience.  
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.  
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.  
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:  
**07771 727119**

#### Roofing

**GRIFFIN ROOFING**  
All aspects of roofing work undertaken  
Fascias, Soffits and Guttering, Roof Conversions and more. OAP Discounts  
Free Quotes:  
07734 432235 • 0121 4396145

**AA ROOF DOCTOR**  
FLAT ROOF SPECIALIST  
ALL ROOFING WORK UNDERTAKEN  
Tile replacement/Chimney pointing  
Fascias & Guttering  
**01902 562393**

**MG ROOFING**  
Flat Roofing, Tiling, Roof Repairs, Fascias and Gutters.  
Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.  
[www.mgroofingwestmidlands.co.uk](http://www.mgroofingwestmidlands.co.uk)

#### Rubbish Removal

**LETS TALK RUBBISH** No Skips Needed, Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

#### Skip Hire

**Grinsells Skip Hire LTD**  
Mini, Midi, Maxi, Large Skips.  
Monday to Friday  
Saturday half day.  
**0121 555 6060**

### t.v. / home entertainment

#### Service

**AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST**  
Any TV Repairs. Digital aerials, sky, CCTV cameras, TV wall mounts and TV set ups. 07850 330251.

## 4

### Pets & Animals

#### Equestrian Corner

**ALL READERS** are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

#### Guns & Dogs

**NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS**  
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

#### Pets Corner

**NOTICE TO READERS**  
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:  
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.  
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.  
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

## 5

### Business & Farming

#### Business Opportunities

**READERS** are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

#### Business Services

**SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES** Need help promoting your business on Facebook email: [tony@midlandmedia.co.uk](mailto:tony@midlandmedia.co.uk) or call 07870586304

## 6

### Property

#### Accommodation To Let

**NOTICE TO READERS**  
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

**NOTICE TO READERS**  
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

**DUDLEY 2-Bed** new build apartment, nice area, dss ok, deposit negotiable. Call / text 07716 715851.

**ROOM TO LET**, Cromer Gardens, Whitmore Reans, 25 years and over, £30 per week. 07368 315051.

#### Overseas Property

**NOTICE TO READERS**  
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

#### Property Exchanges

**STOURBRIDGE**  
Large 2 bedroomed Council Flat, middle floor, near Town Centre, for 1 bedroomed Council or Housing Association Flat within Dudley Borough.  
£20 pw ref.  
**01384 378733.**



## Properties Wanted

**WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!**  
**FAST 4 Your House CASH**

**You agree the price, we buy the house...**  
• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU  
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION

**0800 999 999 6**  
**01384 500 500** 30 yrs

www.black-countryhomes.co.uk \* subject to terms

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**FOR YOUR HOUSE**  
**UP TO £25,000 CASH ADVANCE NOW (in 24hrs)**  
\* Free Solicitors • No Fees • Any House • Any Condition  
**0800 389 6788 01902 628047** Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week Terms applicable

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**CALL US FREE 24 Hours/ 7days**  
**0800 246 1047**

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✓ STOP Repossession/Eviction  
✓ Release Your Equity Today  
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**Yes! HOMEBUYERS**  
THE EASY WAY TO SELL YOUR HOUSE  
**We Buy Houses For Cash**  
Free Valuation? Yes! No Fees? Yes! Any Location? Yes!  
Fast Sale? Yes! Any House? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!  
Get your FREE, instant cash offer today!  
**Call 0121 663 1403**  
or text "Cash" to 66777 [yeshomebuyers.com](http://yeshomebuyers.com)

**GOAL**  
THE ONLY READ FOR REAL FANS EVERY MONDAY  
Express & Star

**We buy houses**  
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- avoid repossession  
- behind on payments  
- job relocation  
- unwanted inheritance  
**What more - we buy in any condition**  
No estate agent fees  
We pay all your legal fees  
**ACT NOW!**  
Contact us on:  
**07796 801219 / 07988 882090**

**7**  
**Jobs**

## Courses

**BIRMINGHAM: 5-6 May and 5-6 September**  
**STOKE: 6-7 August TELFORD: 8-9 August**  
**WOLVERHAMPTON: 8-9 March & 25-26 July**  
**Learn how to take blood**  
**TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST**  
**Introduction to Phlebotomy**  
**TWO DAY COURSE - NATIONALLY RECOGNISED**  
• Allied Healthcare Career Path  
• Accredited (advanced) qualification  
• No previous experience required  
For more info, or to book online: **www.geopace.com**  
High demand in: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - MOD - Research

## Full Time General

**THE APPRENTICESHIP SHOW**



Apprenticeships are open to ALL ages  
Come and find out how they could work for you

**Thursday 8 March 2018**  
**The International Centre, Telford**  
**12noon - 7.30pm Last entry 7pm**



[www.telfordjobbox.co.uk/tas18](http://www.telfordjobbox.co.uk/tas18)

Showcasing 100's of apprenticeships opportunities across Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire, The West Midlands and beyond.



## TAXI OFFICE OPERATOR

A reliable person required to take and pass bookings. Knowledge of local area and own transport would be an advantage.

Experience preferred but not essential

Main hours Fri/Sat 17.00 - 01.00 £7.50p/h. Additional day hours available.

Waterfront Cars, Dudley DY2 0RL

Email: [ali.waterfrontcars@live.co.uk](mailto:ali.waterfrontcars@live.co.uk)

Tel: 01384 78781 or 07956 285555 after 2pm

**Waterfront Cars**  
Many miles best taxi service

**8**  
**Motoring**

**Cars Over £1500**

**HONDA Cr/V 2.0i VTEC SE**  
**SPORTS STATION WAGON**  
**5DR, AUTOMATIC**

Black 4WB Honda, very low guaranteed mileage, 77,000, in good condition, serviced and MoT's all done by local garage and all available to inspect, current MoT to November 2018, scratch on rear near side and dent in passenger door.

Starts and drives really well.

£1,595.

01902 375006/07885 835822.

## ESTATE

**SKODA OCTAVIA**  
**SE TDI CR ESTATE 1.6**  
2015  
White,  
FSH  
40,000 miles.  
£9,250.  
07812 357499  
(Wombourne).

## ECONOMICAL

**TOYOTA YARIS 1.3**  
2005, 5dr hatchback.  
2 lady owners from new.  
full MoT, recently serviced.  
Service history.  
Immaculate condition.  
**£1,850.**  
**07467 562680.**

## BARGAIN

**VAUXHALL VECTRA**  
2006,  
23,000 miles,  
immaculate inside and out,  
MoT'd  
**£2,300**  
**01902 673844.**

## Cars Over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.



**FORD CMAX TITANIUM**

12 reg, only 19,500 miles, white, 1.6 TDCI. Immaculate. £30 road tax. Genuine reason for sale. Wolverhampton area.

£6,950.

07931 562064.

## Classic Cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.  
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

## Commercial Vehicles

**VW TRANSPORTER** LWB, 2009, white, ply lined, 114K miles, service history, fine example. VAT exempt, £6,995 ono. 07773 629986.

## Scrap Vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

**ABC AUTO SALVAGE**  
**WANTED URGENT**  
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered  
Spares Always Available  
**0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400.**  
Oldbury Area.

## Vehicles Wanted

**CROWN MOTORS** guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

**alan reed cars**  
Used cars wanted for cash  
Top prices paid. HP settled.  
Buyer could call.  
**01562 711083 / 07831 245313**

**9**  
**Local Information**

## Public Notices

## LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to

**Marie Hogg on**  
**01902 713146**  
or email [marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk)

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

**DAVID ROBERT JAMES SALT (Deceased)**  
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 59 Springfield Road Halesowen West Midlands B62 8JZ, who died on 09/10/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before two months from the date of this publication, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.  
**NORTHWOOD BANKS & CO**  
1600 Coventry Road Yardley  
Birmingham B26 1AL  
TS20949

**10**  
**Personals**

## Personal

**ATTRACTIVE** lonely Female seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489 181.

**DECENT MAN**  
60, car, job, house, non smoker, light drinker, easy going loyal nature, 5ft 8 medium build enjoys gym, yoga, theatre, walks, music, nights and days in and out.

Looking for honest and caring female, any age to share life's joys, initially friendship, possible relationship.  
Codsall area.  
**Box Number P21089**, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

**DEDICATED CHRISTIAN COLIN**  
Please Contact P.  
**Box Number P21068**, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

**LADY 72**  
WLTm Gentleman for days out, holidays etc, willing split costs.  
See where it goes.  
**Box Number P21086**, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

**BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS OR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE AT**

**bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk**

**and become one of hundreds of customers who regularly receive exclusive special offers & discounts.**



**Classified Ads**



# Volvo's XC40 is a breath of fresh air

By Tom Wiltshire

The XC40 is Volvo's new compact SUV – and note that the company calls it an SUV, and not a crossover. With high ground clearance, four-wheel drive available and “the proportions of an SUV”, this is less of a jacked-up hatchback and more of a scaled-down XC60.

The new baby of the Volvo range is also the brand's first entrant into this massively popular market sector, and with its fashion-led design it aims straight at the heart of the territory the Range Rover Evoque has occupied so well.

The XC40 sits upon a brand-new platform that will go on to underpin several future models of the Swedish firm's range. Called CMA (Compact Modular Architecture), it will allow Volvo to offer the XC40 with not just petrol and diesel engines, but hybrid and even pure electric powertrains.

Occupying a market sector the firm hasn't entered before, the XC40 is by definition all-new, though items have been borrowed from across Volvo's range of 60 and 90 series cars.

Volvo's also using the XC40 to launch a new way of owning your car. Named Care by Volvo, it's more akin to a phone contract than a standard PCP or contract hire – owners pay Volvo a monthly fee which covers ownership of the vehicle and almost every other expense – tax, maintenance, and insurance. It also allows users to ‘borrow’ a larger car for up to 14 days a year. Currently only available within the M25, care by Volvo will roll out across the country if demand is strong enough.

We had the opportunity to sample both T5 petrol and D4 diesel models, both mated to eight-speed automatic gearboxes. The

2.0-litre petrol, though smooth and powerful, is noisy when pressed, and with high fuel consumption it's unlikely to be a big seller.

Instead, Volvo expects the bulk of sales to come from diesel models. Though grumbly at low speeds, the diesel engine soon quiets down at a cruise, and with 187bhp on tap it has more than enough shove for cutthroat city driving or long motorway journeys.

Initially, these will be the only two engines available, though later in 2018 Volvo will launch lower-powered engines – a 148bhp D3 diesel and 154bhp and 187bhp T3 and T3 petrols. All but T3 and D3 engines are offered with standard all-wheel drive and eight-speed autos – lower powered engines get front-wheel drive and six-speed manual gearboxes.

Ride comfort is excellent, even on the optional 19-inch wheels of our test car.

No compact SUV could reasonably be called a design triumph, but the XC40 is arguably one of the best of the bunch. Neat proportions give it a pleasingly rugged stance, and it's chock-full of neat detailing inside and out, like the tiny Swedish flag adornment on the corner of the bonnet.

Volvo's bold corporate grille dominates the front, flanked by eye-catching ‘Thors Hammer’ LED daytime running lights. Standard LED headlights ensure even base-spec Momentum cars look premium.

The XC40 is available with a wide array of paint colours including dual-tone combinations. Stylish alloy wheel designs stand out from the crowd too.

Step into an XC40 from a Range Rover Evoque and you'll be floored. The Volvo's interior is a genuinely lovely place to be, with great-quality materials and superbly comfortable seats even on base-spec cars.

The centre console is arranged around



Neat proportions give the XC40 a pleasantly rugged stance and it's chock-full of neat detailing inside and out

Volvo's nine-inch portrait-oriented touchscreen infotainment system. It's slick and works well. The company's main goal for the XC40's interior was to carve out storage spaces wherever possible – and it's achieved it. There's even a superbly engineered ‘curry hook’, which folds down from the glovebox to keep your Tikka Masala safely hung up rather than slopping around on the floor.

The clever touches continue in the boot, with a multifunctional false floor that can hide the parcel shelf, hang up bags and keep shopping from rolling around all at the same time. The boot itself is decently large at 460 litres, while six-footers will be able to sit comfortably in the rear.

Equipment levels are impressive. All cars come with LED headlights, navigation and a 12.3-inch digital dial display.

Three trim levels will be on offer in the UK – base-spec Momentum, sporty R-Design and flagship Inscription. Each also gains a ‘Pro’ variant, aimed at fleet buyers who may want choice equipment without delving into the options list.

R-Design adds leather and Nubuck upholstery, a sports chassis and racy alloy wheels, while Inscription switches aluminium dashboard inserts for wood, adds chrome around the window trim and adds a crystal to the gearknob. Safety kit is also generous, with autonomous braking capable of detecting

vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and even large animals. Spec the optional Intellisafe Assist pack and you'll benefit from adaptive cruise control with Volvo's brilliant Pilot Assist semi-autonomous driving system, which takes the sting out of motorway stints.

The XC40 is a breath of fresh air in a market sector that's quickly becoming bloated. It's neat exterior and wonderful interior are sure to earn it admiring glances, and it's every bit as impressive on the road as its main rivals.

Generous standard equipment and a predicted class-leading residual value is great too.

Model: Volvo XC40 D4.  
Price as tested: £35,705

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Brand new compact SUV now on Motability scheme

## MG ZS joins the Motability scheme

MG Motor UK's brand-new compact-SUV, the MG ZS, is now available to lease on the Motability scheme, meaning you could drive away in the stylish SUV from as little as a £45 advanced payment.

On offer for the advanced payment, and 100 per cent of the weekly allowance, the MG ZS is available to people on the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMC DLA), the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (ERMC PIP) or the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) schemes. In addition, the MG ZS can be leased at a similarly competitive rate for people on the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS).

Available on Motability at Excite and Exclusive trim levels, in both manual and automatic transmissions, the MG ZS comes packed with 'extras' as standard. An industry-leading 8" touch sensitive infotainment screen is supported by DAB radio (on the Exclusive and Excite models), while Bluetooth hands-free and remote central locking is available across the range. Cruise control is also included, while air conditioning comes as standard on Excite and Exclusive models, and Satellite Navigation and a rear camera are standard on the Exclusive variant.

Harvey France, spokesperson for MG Motor UK, said: "Over two-thirds of the dealerships in the MG network have a Motability-trained specialist as part of their team.

"They are on hand to provide expert advice to customers and we are actively supporting other dealerships to install a trained member of staff. We strongly believe in Motability, and it is a great initiative that we are proud to be a part of."

The addition of the MG ZS means the whole MG range is now available on the Motability scheme. Customers can also choose from the spacious MG GS SUV, or the stylish Supermini, the MG3, which is the best value car on the scheme.

For more information about the Motability scheme, or to book a test drive, visit: [www.mg.co.uk/motability/](http://www.mg.co.uk/motability/)

# Latest Megane R.S. feels at home both on road and track

By Jack Evans

The Megane R.S. has been one of the most crucial hot hatches in the segment for some time now, and here we find ourselves in the latest generation.

With its predecessors regarded as some of the finest-handling hatches of all time, the new Megane R.S. has a lot to live up to, but Renault hopes that thanks to a range of new technologies and chassis enhancements this version will be the best yet. However, there are now more competitors than ever for it to take on, making the Megane R.S.'s job even trickier.

There's quite a lot going on underneath the Megane's muscular styling. We've now got four-wheel steering, a powerful turbocharged bonnet and – enthusiasts rejoice – the choice of either a dual-clutch automatic or six-speed manual gearbox.

### Responsive

Renault says that this latest R.S. features more influence from its learning in motorsport than ever before. Engineers from the firm's F1 team even helped those developing the Megane's engine, ensuring that it was as responsive as possible – despite being turbocharged.

The exterior has also been beefed up, as have the chassis and brakes. In all, it's designed to be the most involving Megane R.S. yet. There's the choice of either Sport or Cup chassis too, with the former more road-ready and the latter aimed at those who want to use their Megane on track.

The new Megane R.S. is powered by a 1.8-litre turbocharged petrol engine – the same as the one you'll find in the Alpine A110 sports car. Here, it produces 278bhp and 390Nm, which enables the Megane to hit 60mph in 5.6 seconds before topping out at 155mph.

As we mentioned, two transmissions are available – a dual-clutch automatic or a six-speed manual. However, the biggest change comes elsewhere. The new Megane now features all-wheel steering – a first for the hot-hatch segment. At speeds of up to 37mph, both the front and rear wheels turn in the same direction, affording the car better high-speed stability. At low speed, they move in opposite directions, and this means the car can turn more sharply than with a conventional set-up.

A hot hatch needs to be sharp, nimble and, most of all, fun to drive. In most respects the Megane R.S. ticks these boxes. The 1.8-litre engine feels punchy at low speeds yet has a willingness to be revved out too. It sounds characterful enough as well, though only when switched into all-out 'Race' driving mode – in regular modes it's pretty muted. The handling is sharp, with perhaps a little too much artificial weight added in racier modes, but the four-wheel steering does make the car particularly agile in the bends – and it'll happily begin to rotate on a lifted throttle, but it never becomes scary or difficult to drive.



Megane R.S. is a huge amount of fun to drive – and that's one of the key things you need with any hot hatch

There are some niggles, however – the gearshift paddles are mounted just slightly too high on the steering wheel, while the brake pedal lacks a degree of bite under the first inches of travel.

Despite being based on a rather run-of-the-mill hatchback, the R.S. manages to look impressive in the metal. The arches have been fleshed out at both the front and rear, while small touches such as air vents just behind the front wheels and a large hexagonal exhaust surround help differentiate the R.S. from the regular Megane. Certainly, there were few people we passed while on our southern Spain test route who didn't stop to stare at the Renault – and that's exactly the effect that hot hatches should have.

The R.S. moniker has always been an indication of truly sporty cars, and enthusiasts instantly recognise the level of tuning and mechanical enhancement that it represents – a feature that can't quickly be attained but has to be earned over time.

Those looking for a flamboyant, over-the-top interior may have to look in other directions than the Renault Megane R.S. For the most part, though, it's a pleasant place to be – the sports seats are hugely comfortable with plenty of support and adjustment, while the seating position itself is spot-on. The materials throughout are decent enough, with only a few low-rent plastics on the dashboard and around the infotainment system spoiling the overall effect.

A hot hatch needs to be usable on a daily basis, after all, so it's handy that the Megane R.S. features both decent

rear-seat legroom and an impressively large boot. It means that those who plan on using their hot hatch every day – as they should be – won't get caught short in terms of practicality.

The Megane R.S. benefits from quite a lot of standard equipment. Central to the cabin's design is the large 8.7-inch infotainment screen, which houses satellite navigation and media functions. One of the cleverest functions it features is the RS Monitor. This allows drivers to connect a dash cam or smartphone to the system and film their laps on track.

Then, the car's in-board telematics can overlay details such as speed and G-reading on to the footage, which can then be uploaded to the internet.

The screen itself looks good, but unfortunately small icons make it a little hard to navigate – and are particularly annoying when you're trying to do something as simple as input a destination into the navigation.

The Megane R.S. is a little bit of a mixed bag. The engine, chassis and ride are all impressive. The 1.8-litre unit is responsive and pulls hard throughout the rev range, while the Sport chassis is just well judged enough for the road.

However, a few niggles such as the infotainment system and oddly placed gearshift paddles do bring things down. That said, the Megane R.S. is still a huge amount of fun to drive – and that's one of the key things you need with any hot hatch.

● Renault Megane R.S. Price: £30,000 (est)

# Testing time for Michelin tyres — first report

By John Griffiths

We British are a little obsessed with the weather: probably because we have so much of it and it affects our lives in so many ways.

One of these, of course, is driving: particularly the effect varying conditions have on our grip on the road and therefore our safety.

We may have only a few days of snow and slush a year, but will have witnessed how this can bring the country to a near standstill.

Tyre manufacturers and some safety organisations recommend fitting winter, or snow, tyres as soon as there's a serious chill in the air.

But bearing the mind the cost of buying them, and changing four tyres twice a year, is it really worth it?

The problem is winter tyres are specifically designed for use in temperatures less than seven degrees C: any higher, and in dry

conditions, their performance drops off, they wear much more quickly and may result in increased road noise.

The answer may be cross-climate tyres, designed with unique tread patterns and compounds to give you best of both worlds performance for traction in all weathers and at all temperatures.

### CrossClimate

I have been trying a set of Michelin CrossClimate tyres on my supermini: the latest CrossClimate + aren't available for my 14-inch wheels.

In independent tests, the CrossClimate scored highly against a range of other brands for traction and braking in snow, good wet weather performance and very short braking distances in dry conditions – qualifying it as a top all-weather tyre.

The difference after fitting the Michelins (my car was previously shod with a popular, mid-range standard brand) was instantly noticeable: particularly the steering which

felt more positive and accurate, with less of a tendency towards oversteer on faster corners.

The improvement is equally noticeable in the dry or the wet, an impression borne out by an independent comparison of similar tyres.

Getting to and from my home, which is on a hill, was also trouble-free thanks to the new tyres.

The CrossClimates were also noticeably quieter than the standard tures they replaced, and provided a more supple ride.

This combination of performance characteristics is due to the joint action of three key innovations: an innovative tread rubber compound, a unique tread pattern, and high performance sipes or groves.

The 'V' tread pattern maximizes the clawing effect on the snow throughout the tyre's life, and contributes to the improved life of the tyre.

How well they do, and how my fuel consumption is affected, will be the subject of a later report.







Welcome to Old Hill – new signing Naqaash Tahir



Test match players Ron and Dean Headley and Mushtaq Mohammed have all represented Old Hill Cricket Club down the years



James Lane, centre, of sponsors Homeserve Furniture Repairs Ltd, with, from left, club captain Jonathan Wright, chairman Mo Javaid, Naqaash Tahir and first XI skipper Ravi Nagra

# Old Hill bid to make the long climb back

**OLD HILL Cricket Club chairman Mo Javaid is determined to get the club on the front foot this summer**

The Haden Hill outfit have found themselves in a spin in recent years with back-to-back relegations meaning they will start this season in the bottom tier of the Birmingham League.

To cricket players and followers of a certain vintage that fact is difficult to comprehend. Old Hill are steeped in history and were one of the big-hitters on the club cricket scene.

During their halcyon days in the late 80s and early 90s they appeared in five National Knockout finals at Lord's and were triumphant on four occasions.

## Troubled

They had a following that was the envy of clubs up and down the country with ex-Test cricketers such as Ron Headley (West Indies), Mushtaq Mohammed (Pakistan) and Greg Matthews (Australia) plying their trade while a young Dean Headley would go on to represent England.

But times have not been so kind since the club dropped out of the Birmingham League top flight in 2006 and last season's troubled campaign ended with them taking another hit.

But what's gone is gone as far as Javaid is concerned and he is only looking to the future.

His passion for the place is obvious as he talks about the good times and the bad.

"I was voted in as chairman in July last year so this will be my first full season in that role," said Javaid.

"But this is my 33rd season at the club. I have seen all the good times, everything that was going Old Hill won it.

## SPORT FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

***"The numbers have declined but the better standard of cricket you play you will get people back."***

"I have played here and watched games here when there has been five or six hundred people watching.

"Obviously the numbers have declined but the better standard of cricket you play you will get people back.

"We have got a fantastic following still. I am probably biased but as far as I am concerned it's the best in the league.

"Even now you will get 100, 200 people following. We need to give them something to shout about now."

After spending three decades at Old Hill Javaid is more qualified than most to comment and while he is upbeat and positive about the future, sometimes actions speak louder than words, and the club's first piece of winter recruitment speaks volumes.

Old Hill have made a statement of intent for the season ahead by signing former Warwickshire seamer Naqaash Tahir.

Tahir, a proven wicket-taker, posed plenty of problems for batsmen during his spells with Smethwick and Moseley.

He should prove quite a handful in division three and Javaid is delighted to have him on board and to spearhead what he hopes will be a turnaround in fortunes.

"Over the last few years things have gone backwards and unfortunately last year was

the big one when we suffered relegation to division three," said Javaid.

"There were lots of reasons for that and it didn't help that we had four or five first team players injured for a long time throughout the season and then obviously the situation we had with the disciplinary hearing and being docked points after the Fordhouses game. That knocked us for six really.

"But we have said as a club that's happened and it's gone now. We have got to look to the future and we have got to be positive about things.

"And I think you can see signs of that positivity by signing Naqaash. He is a quality player.

"As soon as people saw that we had signed him I think they were thinking 'hold on what's happening?'."

## Steeped

"We have been talking to him over the winter period and I think he wanted a new challenge."

Further new signings are in the pipeline for a side that will be once again led by Jonathan Wright, another man steeped in Old Hill's history, with Javaid insisting promotion is the aim.

"We want to be in the top two next season, we want to be promoted," said Javaid.

"There are lots of things happening at the club and with Naqaash coming, certainly on the cricket side, it's going to help us build as well.

"We are refurbishing the clubhouse. We are having a new bar put in, new carpets, tables, chairs, curtains and that sort of stuff.

"We have got a new committee and we are all very, very keen to develop both the cricket side and the clubhouse.

"And a local company, Homeserve from Brierley Hill, are sponsoring us again.

"There is a lot of enthusiasm and we are looking forward to the season."

## Enjoy knockout night with boxer McGuigan

MORE than 30 years on from one of boxing's most memorable nights, fighting legend Barry McGuigan will entertain his fans again – in Birmingham. The Evening With . . . event takes place on March 23 at the Irish Centre in Digbeth. It was a summer evening in 1985, at the Loftus Road football ground in London, that 'The Clones Cyclone' deposed the mighty Eusebio Pedroza to win the WBA world featherweight title.

It was the culmination of a remarkable journey for the charismatic young man from County Monaghan in Ireland. His sporting triumph is a story which brought the divided communities in the north of Ireland together. Today, McGuigan writes and commentates on the sport, runs the successful Cyclone Promotions Company and manages some of the world's best boxers.

Tickets for the event, which will also include a photo opportunity, are £25 and available from either behind the bar at the Irish Centre in Digbeth or online at [www.shamrockevents.co.uk](http://www.shamrockevents.co.uk)

## Ben goes for boxing gold on Gold Coast

BLACK County boxing hope Ben Whittaker is off to the Commonwealth Games in Australia – and warned his rivals: "I'm going for gold on the Gold Coast."

The Darlaston fighter has been selected to represent England at the games which start Down Under in April and will fight in the 75kg category.

The 20-year-old said he couldn't wait to get out there and don the England vest. "We're due to fly out in mid-march for a training camp and to get acclimatised ahead of the games," he said. "I'm going for gold on the Gold Coast. I'm not looking for anything else other than a gold medal.

"I'm going there to win and let all the others worry about me – I know that if I box how I know I can then I'll be wearing a gold medal round my neck at the end," said Whittaker, who boxes out of Firewalker Boxing Club, in Wolverhampton.

Whittaker has also set his sights on the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo before turning professional.

## FA investment offers grants to new teams

A £1.5 million FA investment will give aspiring grassroots footballers from two under-represented groups a greater chance of participation.

The Grow the Game programme, delivered by the Football Foundation and launched in 2010, offers grants to grassroots clubs that wish to create new teams. This year, applications are being encouraged from clubs that want to start female or disability teams.

Grow the Game grants help to reduce the costs associated with setting up new teams, with £1,500 available for each team a club creates. Funding can help pay for FA coaching courses, league affiliation costs, referees' fees, first aid kits and strips. Applications close on March 29. For details, clubs should contact their own County FA or visit the Football Foundation website.

Grow the Game is inclusive of players from different genders, ethnic backgrounds, faiths, ages, sexual orientations and those with disabilities. Applications that originate from, or provide for, under-represented communities are being encouraged.





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## Suspension hitch hits rally hopes

STOURBRIDGE'S Richard Sykes suffered a disappointing end to his first rally of the season, the Cambrian, after mechanical problems forced him to retire on the penultimate stage while leading his class.

The opening stages were very wet and slippery but Sykes made a good start in his Bathams Brewery, The Body Clinic, Staniland Marina, Summit Platforms and GI Sykes Ltd-supported Citroën DS3 R3, taking the lead of his class.

"Conditions were very challenging early on," said Sykes. "As well as the slippery surface we also had visibility problems due to the very low sun dazzling us and there are some pretty big drops in Wales, so I drove quite cautiously but I was quick enough to be leading the class at first service. I was very happy with this as the stages were very tight and technical which doesn't really suit our car."

The following stages were more open and faster and Sykes stepped up the pace, not only leading his class but also setting fastest time of all the two-wheel drive cars. It looked as though Sykes and co-driver Simon Taylor would be getting their season off to a flying start but hopes were ended in stage six when a joint broke on the suspension, which meant they could not carry on.

"We were going really well on the faster stages and we were absolutely on it when we had the suspension breakage. It's a shame we came away with no points but I'm pleased we showed we have the pace to be at the top of the two-wheel drive leaderboard."

Sykes will be competing again at the Malcolm Wilson rally in Cumbria in early March.

## Andrews back in the saddle at Heathens

BRADLEY ANDREWS has been named as the final member of Cradley's National Trophy side.

New Zealand-born Andrews is back with the Heathens two seasons after making his British League debut with the club. He joins Adam Roynon, Jordan Jenkins, Kyle Bickley, Conor Dwyer, Drew Kemp and Jason Edwards in the line-up.

Andrews, is looking forward to his return. He said: "The supporters were great right through and a lot are still good friends, so I'm really looking forward to meeting up with everyone again."

"I think the team that has been picked for Cradley has some very strong riders in it and I'll have to be at my best to get my four rides."

Heathens Director Nigel Pearson said: "I'd like to congratulate Will Pottinger and Gary Patchett on the work they've done with the team."

Heathens have received an off-track boost with Motor Market continuing their role as title sponsors.

## Josie leaps into action at championships

THE British Indoor Athletics Championships in Birmingham saw Josie Oliarnyk finished ninth in the Long Jump with a leap of 5.83m an excellent performance for a junior athlete from Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club.

Fellow HA & CC athlete Jamie Sircom completed his 250th Park Run at the Sandwell Valley Park Run.

The previous weekend saw the young athletes taking on a muddy Aldersley cross country course in the West Midlands Young Athletes League.

Orla Walker finished 13th in the U17 girls. The U11 boys team finished 11th led home by Luke Mannings in 46th, Joshua Bevins 61st, Isaac Coleman 111th and Alphonse Evans 123rd.

The under 17 men finished fifth with Louis Henry in 17th, Matthew Wilkinson 26th and Lachlan MacPhail 33rd. The U11 Girls also finished fifth with excellent runs from Olivia Stark in 10th and Cerys Brook in 12th followed in by Annabel Stark 39th, Lilly Paice 48th, Laura Harris 59th, Jessica Dale 65th, Leah Paice 70th, Holly

Eastoe 79th and Lilly Barnes 83rd. The under 15 boys were fourth with Owen Jinks 12th, Max Price 15th, Theo Sims Woodhouse 18th, Sam Mannings 19th, James Rolinson 22nd and Josh Turner 68th.

Amelia Hartshorn 16th led the U13 girls team to seventh, followed by Keriann Huxley in 21st, Francesca Teague 38th, Paige Allbutt 53rd, Emily Amos 58th, Kiki Douglas 64th, Charlie Ann Baird 68th, Isabel Knowles 70th, and Naomi Banks 100th.

U15 boys finished fifth with Owen Jinks 12th.

# TRIBUTES TO EAGLES BOSS

TRIBUTES have been paid to Ian Pound, President of Kewford Eagles FC, who died following a road traffic accident.

The stalwart for the Wall Heath-based club spent three weeks in the critical care unit at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital before his death on February 6.

His daughter-in-law Sarah Pound said "The hospital staff were wonderful and they really did try everything they could but unfortunately he could not be saved."

His funeral is being held on Wednesday, February 28, at 12.20pm at Stourbridge Crematorium. Donations in his memory will be divided between the critical care ward at the QE and the Air Ambulance, which had rushed him to the hospital.

Ian Pound was the longest serving member of the Kewford committee, joining in 1995 as team manager for a new under 9s team, assisted by his wife Wendy. He became chairman in 2000 and president of the football club four years later, a role he held until his untimely death.

### Park

When Kewford achieved charter standard status Ian and Wendy managed the first Kewford Under 19s team and steered the club to achieving charter standard adult club status.

Ian was instrumental in helping to secure £800,000 funding from the Football Foundation towards the building of Eagle Park in Wall Heath, the club's new home for Kewford Eagles comprising 11 football pitches. It was formally opened by Sir Trevor Brooking in April 2012 and will be a lasting legacy.

Lynn Boleyn MBE, charity trustee of Kewford Eagles said: "We will always hold very special memories of such a truly remarkable person who would go out of his way to help people. He was dedicated to grassroots football and Kewford Eagles in particular."



Ian with wife Wendy and their grandchildren



At the Mayor of Dudley's Civic Awards in April 2013

## Old Hales trio join defending champions

THREE Old Halesonians players were included in a reshuffled squad when defending champions Worcestershire & Herefordshire as faced Greater Birmingham in the Iskitz Three Counties Championship last night (Wednesday).

W&H launched their title defence in the rugby contest with

a 22-18 victory over Shropshire at Worcester two weeks ago with Old Hales' Andy Holloway among the points scorers. He was in the line-up again for the clash at Birmingham Exiles' Elmdon ground, along with Matt Young and Sam Jones.

The defending champions cast their net far and wide with

12 clubs represented in the match squad. In a rematch of last season's finale, victory for W&H would see them progress to the final.

The final group match between Shropshire and Greater Birmingham is at Telford Hornets on March 14 with the overall final at Ledbury on May 20.

## Late goal is a glimmer for Glassboys

### Stourbridge 2 Buxton 1

STOURBRIDGE got a vital three points – their first maximum in four home games – thanks to a quality strike by Leon Broadhurst deep into injury time.

The win keeps alive their chances of making the play-offs.

Stourbridge had the better of the second half after going into the break at 1-1.

Buxton goalkeeper Jan Budtz had a large part to play in denying Glassboys, saving from Kaiman Anderson on only three minutes and Paul McCone from the resulting corner.

The visitors thought they had taken the lead when Bradley Grayson bundled the ball into the net but the linesman had flagged for offside.

On the half-hour Grayson got his goal when a corner was punched out by Matt Gould and Joe Maguire's shot took a deflection before the defender latched onto it.

On 37 minutes the ball was in the path of Luke Benbow and he made no mistake to level.

In the second half three substitutes were introduced by Stour and it was the final one, Edison Antonio, who made progress down the wing and crossed for Broadhurst to turn and shoot past former Wolves keeper Budtz.

Stourbridge boss Gary Hackett was delighted with the way his team persevered and ground out the result. But he is under no illusions how difficult it is going to be to get in the play-offs.

## No mercy shown on Merseyside for Yeltz

### Marine 1 Halesowen 0

A last-minute penalty miss cost Halesowen dear as their relegation rivals pulled away from bottom of the table.

Jordan Goddard saw his spot-kick saved by Martin Fearon as the Merseysiders took the spoils to leave Halesowen and Sutton Coldfield stranded, both having had points deducted.

Marine had taken the lead on 10 minutes when Liam Tongue was left unmarked from a Kenny Strickland corner and made no mistake. Daniel Platt did well to save a Florian Da Silva shot on 38 minutes, after Yeltz skipper Kyle Morrison had headed over from a free kick.

★★★

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**ONLY AT HALESOWEN MOTOR HOUSE**

## MASSIVE VAUXHALL USED CAR SELECTION – ALL PRICED TO SELL!

16/66	Insignia HAT 2.0CDTi 170 SRi NAV eF	Olympic 7701 miles	£14295	12/62	Astra Gtc Sri Cdti S/S	Black 12314 miles	£9000
16/66	Mokka X Active Turbo S/S	Summit White 15551 miles	£13795	15/65	Corsa 3Dr HAT 1.4 90ps Energy A/C A	Magma Red 9989 miles	£8999
16/16	GTC CPE 1.4i Turbo Ld/ed St/sp 3dr	Olympic 11211 miles	£13495	14/64	Zafira Design Nav Cdti	Silver 26311 miles	£8888
15/65	Insignia Elite Nav Cdti A 5dr	Silver 20559 miles	£13295	14/14	Mokka HAT 5Dr 1.4 140 TBO Xclsiv 4X	Olympic 67000 miles	£8888
16/16	Astra 5Dr 1.6CDTi 136ps Elite NAV	Power Red 5870 miles	£12495	14/64	Astra Elite 1.6 5dr	Blue 30924 miles	£8695
16/16	Insignia HAT 1.6CDTi SRi NAV S/S 5d	Black 11764 miles	£11999	14/64	Meriva Se Turbo	White 27523 miles	£8598
16/65	Corsa Vxr	Black 14100 miles	£11495	11/61	Corsa Vxr	Blue 30022 miles	£8495
14/64	Vauxhall Mokka SE Turbo S/S	Red 17636 miles	£11495	16/16	Corsa 5Dr HAT 1.2i VVT Energy	Shiny Rock 21514 miles	£8295
15/65	Mokka Tech Line Cdti S/S 5dr	Orange 11902 miles	£11295	14/64	Corsa Sri 3dr	White 6587 miles	£8095
14/64	Zafira Tourer Sri Turbo	Silver 13297 miles	£11195	15/65	Meriva Tech Line	Black 23699 miles	£7777
17/67	PRE REG Meriva 1.4i 100ps Life A/C	Sovereign 10 miles	£10495	15/15	Corsa Excite Ac Ecoflex 3dr	Dark Sea 7651 miles	£7777
17/67	Meriva 1.4i 100ps Life A/C	Shiny Rock 10 miles	£10495	14/64	Corsa Se	5dr Blue 4590 miles	£7777
14/64	Suzuki Jimny SZ4 Estate	White 30096 miles	£9999	15/15	Corsa Excite Ac Ecoflex S 3dr	Blue 44982 miles	£6799
17/67	PRE REG Meriva 1.4i 100ps Life A/C	Royal Blue 10 miles	£9999	13/63	Corsa S Ac Ecoflex	5dr Blue 10764 miles	£5999
17/67	PRE REG Meriva 1.4i 100ps Life A/C	Blue 10 miles	£9999	12/12	Corsa 5Dr HAT 1.4 SRi	Silver 60000 miles	£5495
12/62	Antara Exclusiv Cdti S/S	Grey 33217 miles	£9295	10/60	Meriva Exclusiv Turbo 118 5dr	Grey 49000 miles	£4999
14/64	Astra Elite	5dr Silver 13403 miles	£9295				

**WE NEED YOUR PART EXCHANGE!!**

Offers subject to stock availability, terms and conditions. Pictures for illustration purposes only.

**Halesowen Motor House**

Dudley Rd, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3NH. Tel: 0121 503 0001

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**VAUXHALL**





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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (L/100km) - Ignis range: Urban from 51.3 (5.5) to 57.6 (4.9), Extra Urban from 64.2 (4.4) to 70.6 (4.0), Combined from 60.1 (4.7) to 65.7 (4.3). Official CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 106g/km to 97g/km. Swift range: Urban from 44.1 (6.4) to 58.8 (4.8), Extra Urban from 65.7 (4.3) to 76.3 (3.7), Combined from 56.5 (5.0) to 65.7 (4.3). Official CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 114g/km to 97g/km. Vitara range: Urban from 42.1 (6.7) to 61.4 (4.6), Extra Urban from 55.4 (5.1) to 76.3 (3.7), Combined from 49.5 (5.7) to 70.6 (4.0). Official CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 131g/km to 106g/km.

Fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. \*£500 (inc. VAT) discount on list price applies to the purchase of any new and unregistered Suzuki in stock at a participating dealer or at Suzuki's central repository which is ordered from the participating dealer on 17.2.18 and registered by 28.02.18. Subject to availability. This offer is available in addition to selected current offers. This offer is not available in conjunction with Motability, employee, membership or partnership schemes or Contract Hire schemes. UK private customers aged 18+ only. Please see cars.suzuki.co.uk/saturdayevent for full terms and conditions. Offer correct at time of going to print and may be withdrawn at any time.

## ALL USED CAR SELECTION OTHER MAKES - ALL PRICED TO SELL!

14/14 Mercedes-Benz Slk350 Amg Sport Blue, Grey, 25306 miles .....	£20000	11/61 Mini Cooper Coupe, Grey, 40236 miles .....	£8495
16/66 SX4 S-cross 1.0 Sz-t Boosterjet 4WD, Silky Silver, 4976 miles .....	£14495	16/16 Suzuki Swift Sz-L, Orange, 15258 miles .....	£8295
16/66 Suzuki Vitara Sz-T, Black, 10196 miles .....	£13999	14/64 Toyota Aygo X-Cite Vvt-l Cvt 5 dr Orange, 9684 miles.....	£7999
15/65 Volvo V40 R-Design D2 5 dr White, 14050 miles .....	£12999	14/64 Ford Fiesta Zetec 3 dr Red, 37527 miles .....	£7777
12/62 Toyota Gt86 D-4s, Red, 57423 miles .....	£12999	15/15 Swift 5Dr HAT 1.3 SZ3, Bright Red, 15000 miles .....	£7495
14/14 Kia Sportage 2 lsg Crdi, Silver, 29994 miles .....	£11495	08/08 Toyota Prius T Spirit Vv-l Auto 5 dr Silver, 82729 miles .....	£7495
14/64 Kia Sportage 1 Crdi lsg Estate, White, 35549 miles .....	£11495	15/15 Skoda Roomster Se Tsi 5 dr Silver, 12225 miles .....	£7495
17/17 Swift SZ 5Dr HAT 1.0 Sz-t Boosterjet, Pearl White, 1012 miles .....	£10999	16/16 Volkswagen Move Up 3 dr Silver, 5201 miles .....	£6999
16/16 Honda Jazz Se l-Vtec, Blue, 4602 miles.....	£10999	14/14 Honda Jazz l-Vtec Se 5 dr Blue, 47230 miles .....	£6999
15/15 Volkswagen Beetle Tdi Bluemotion Te, White, 23360 miles .....	£10999	14/64 Nissan Micra Acenta 5 dr Red, 29652 miles .....	£6495
17/67 PRE Baleno 5Dr Hatch 1.2 Dualjet SZ, Premium, 10 miles .....	£9999	15/15 Celerio 5Dr HAT 1.0 SZ4, Cerulean, 11850 miles .....	£6495
16/66 Baleno 5Dr Hatch 1.0 Boosterjet SZ, Red, 3175 miles .....	£9999	14/14 Chevrolet Trax Ls, Grey, 48045 miles .....	£6495
15/65 Renault Captur Dynamique Nav Dci 5 dr Black and White, 10481 miles..	£9999	10/60 Ford Fiesta Zetec 3 dr Black, 37620 miles .....	£5999
10/60 Kia Sportage First Edition 5 dr Orange, 40000 miles .....	£9799	12/12 Skoda Citigo Se 12V 3 dr Silver, 36403 miles .....	£4999
15/65 Kia Ceed 2 lsg Crdi 5 dr Red, 15130 miles .....	£9795	10/60 Ford Ka Titanium 3 dr Black, 42000 miles .....	£4495
15/15 Renault Captur D-Que M-Nav Nrg Tc 5, Orange, 12800 miles .....	£9495	10/60 Suzuki Alto Sz4 5 dr White, 36787 miles .....	£3999
15/15 Suzuki Swift Sport 3 dr White, 14000 miles .....	£8999	11/11 Peugeot 308 S Hdi 92, Silver, 32800 miles .....	£3999
16/64 Suzuki Jimny Sz3, White, 24017 miles .....	£8999	10/10 Honda Cbf 1000 A-A, Red, 20000 miles .....	£3799
17/67 PRE Celerio 5Dr HAT 1.0 SZ4, White, 10 miles.....	£8495		

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# SUZUKI S-CROSS

## 1.0 BOOSTERJET SZ4



### Representative Finance Example

On the Road Price	£17,022.00
42 Monthly Payments of	£222.00
Customer Deposit	£2,222.00
Duration of Agreement	43 months
Optional Final Payment	£5,476.00
Total Amount Payable	£17,022.00
Annual Mileage	6,000 p.a.
Personal Contract Plan	

**0% APR** Representative

**£2,222** DEPOSIT

**£222** PER MONTH



# VAUXHALL MOKKA X

## 1.4 TURBO ACTIVE



# SUZUKI VITARA

## 1.6 SZT



**NIL ADVANCE - TAKE YOUR PICK**



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